The GOLD TOOTH

JOHN TAINE

The Gold Tooth

By the Same Author

THE PURPLE SAPPHIRE

QUAYLE'S INVENTION

E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY

The Gold Tooth

PS3503
E435Gb

By

JOHN TAINE

[Author of "The Purple Sapphire," "Quayle's Invention"]

NEW YORK

E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY

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CHAPTER I

THE ACCIDENT

THE tall, dignified foreigner, slowly mounting the main staircase of the Boston Public Library, paused to turn his critical regard on the mural painting "Chemistry." The stately, well-developed figure of the reddish haired lady with the magic wand—the artist's conception of chemistry in general—seemed to rouse the critic's contempt. She certainly was not of his gods. With as strong an expression of distaste as an aristocrat of his nation may vent and still pass for a gentleman, the severe judge of our western art turned his unyielding back on the goddess and resumed his ascent of the marble stairs. Would Hokusai have pictured Chemistry as a red haired woman with a meaningless stick in her left hand? Three deft strokes of the brush would have sufficed the artist to fix all the magic of the elements, from hydrogen to radium, indelibly on the rice paper. Western civilization may be great, but there is a greater, at least in the minds of our unsympathetic critics.

Young Jim Blye descending the marble staircase in

undignified haste collided with the supercilious foreigner and tumbled him back to America.

"I beg your pardon, sir," Blye exclaimed before glancing at his victim's face. A perfectly courteous mask met his eyes.

"Not at all," the injured one replied.

There was a slight accent, nothing outlandish except the manner. It was a shade too polite to be quite decent.

"High-class Jap," Blye muttered to himself as he fled, routed.

The Japanese gentleman continued on his leisurely way to the central desk, while 'Dinosaur'—as Jim Blye was familiarly known to his intimates, whirled like a young tornado up Boylston Street to the directors' dinner.

Dinosaur was one of those last minute men who should never be on time if there is any logic in this world, but who always disappoint their fidgety superiors by turning up promptly at the very last moment. This evening's dinner was to be a solemn feast, with Dinosaur as the main course. He was being sampled, and he knew it. To convince the directors of the Geological Museum that he was indeed the man they needed to lead the new Asiatic expedition, he must arrive at that blessed dinner on time. He did, by three quarters of a second.

Having waited his turn for information with perfect courtesy at the central desk, the Japanese aristocrat made known his wants.

"Do you have the last number of the . . . ?"

"The what?"

In the unexpected fascination of the cold, handsome face before her, the girl at the desk—still in her teens—temporarily lost her wits. What made those impassive, olive-tinted features so deadly attractive? The face was strangely foreign, yet mere novelty was not the clue. What was it? The Japanese repeated his question, more distinctly.

"I'll see," she murmured.

To hide her confusion the girl made great business with the box of cards at her elbow.

"Yes, it is in," she announced finally. Then, still bemused by her budding romance, she broke the library rules. Instead of asking the man to take a seat until the journal was brought, she treated him as if he were a visiting royalty, entitled to extraordinary favors.

"Do you wish me to have it sent to the reading room?" she queried with a bashful glance up at the expressionless face.

"If you please."

He bowed stiffly and moved with the grace of an old Samurai toward the door of Bates Hall.

No sooner had he disappeared than a dapper little Jap emerged from his obscure station beside the big fireplace and walked briskly to the desk. From his self assurance and cocksure 'American' ways this little man might easily have passed as a university student. His English however was bad, and his manner worse.

"What that man want?" he blurted out at the astonished girl.

"I don't understand you," she retorted a trifle tartly.

"That Japanese. What he want?"

"It is none of your business," she flashed, reddening slightly.

"What book he ask for?" the pest persisted.

"I don't know what you are talking about," the girl fibbed. "And if I did," she continued, giving herself away, "I shouldn't tell you. We are not allowed to answer questions of that sort."

"You better tell," the nuisance suggested. His smile was an ingratiating threat.

"I shall call the watchman to put you out if you don't go away."

Favoring the rude little man with her back, she beckoned to a page.

"Fetch this," she said in a low voice, showing the card. "I shall deliver it myself."

The spell of the olive face still fuddled her. It was not her duty to deliver the book to the reading room. Loyalty, born in a moment, impelled her to safeguard her fascinator's interests. Common sense told her that the little man was no friend of her new ideal.

Seeing himself in a pickle, the inquisitive Jap took the girl's hint and asked no more personal questions. For five minutes he stood stolidly at the desk waiting developments.

At last the page sauntered back with a slim pamphlet bound in shrieking green and heavily lettered with German words half a foot long. Too evidently it was the latest issue of some abstruse scientific periodical. Before the girl could snatch the journal to conceal its title, the astute spy had read it at a glance.

He was indeed a highly trained man, although no student, with a first-hand knowledge of printed German and of many other interesting things important in his rather mean profession. Elated by his easy victory he allowed his satisfaction to escape in the sharp, peculiar hiss which seems to be the only audible expression of feeling the Japanese permit themselves. Apparently satisfied with the outcome of his investigation, he walked rapidly away toward the staircase.

Taken in by the simple ruse of her tormentor, the girl decided not to leave her post at the desk. With a gesture that might have been a disappointment, she entrusted the green atrocity to the page, to be delivered to "the Japanese gentleman in the reading room."

The spy was ready. Just as he was about to descend the stairs, he changed his mind, followed the page, saw him deliver the green pamphlet and unobtrusively took up his position at the table behind his quarry. Evidently the mere title of the periodical was not all he wanted.

Like a drug addict seizing the fatal needle, the tall Japanese aristocrat fumbled eagerly at the pages till he found what he sought. His hands shook as his eyes fastened on the German title of the epoch-making discovery.

It was a brief article, scarcely half a page, yet it held the germ of what some day might become the greatest social revolution of all history. The discoverer was a fellow countryman of the trembling reader, a famous professor of chemistry in the Imperial College of Science at Tokyo.

In the old days discoverer and reader had been master and pupil. Now more than mere distance separated them. The master thought the pupil long since dead; the pupil wondered feverishly at nights whether his former master would ever recover by himself the more difficult half of the great lost art. Why had the master at length published his researches? Had he completely solved the problem?

Once a month the renegade pupil searched the current scientific literature for news of his master, for some clue that would lead him to the secret places of the great man's mind without his knowledge. At last, less than a week since, the newspapers from Tokyo to Boston had carried rumors of a sensational discovery by the master. The press might only be exaggerating; Okada must wait for the authoritative report in a reputable scientific journal. The master always published his work first in a German periodical, and here it was, a short half page.

Had the master succeeded? Okada devoured the few brief sentences recording the discovery. There was nothing new—nothing that his former teacher had not known fourteen years previously. Why then had he finally published an incomplete account — startling enough to an unprepared world, but still incomplete? Was it a confession of ultimate failure? Did the master mean "here is my work, the best I can do; finish it"?

For a moment Okada felt a twinge of remorse. He had revered his teacher, and now the old man was acknowledging defeat. Only for a second however did

the pupil's heart soften. Almost instantly the subtle cunning of his oriental mind precipitated his cloudy emotions and left his brain as clear as light. He felt that he was being watched from a great distance by a pair of penetrating eyes. The master guessed that his brilliant pupil still lived, and he sought this means of drawing him back.

To the scientific public the short article was merely the bald announcement of a great discovery; to Okada, reading between the lines, it was at once an appeal for help and an invitation to join forces in the conquest of the world.

This chain of thought, coupled with the subconscious perception of slight, all but audible sounds behind him, suddenly made Okada aware that he was being actively watched. Turning sharply in his chair he looked full into the eyes of the spy. The man had read over Okada's shoulder every word of the master's article. The spy now knew beyond the shadow of a doubt that he had "found his man."

The impassive mask dropped from Okada's face. Leaping to his feet he shot out a hand and grasped the terrified spy by the shoulder. There was a sharp, half-mute groan of pain, and the astonished Bostonians, imbibing culture at their favourite fountain, saw as neat an exhibition of jiu jitsu as ever delighted the court of the Japanese emperor. Before they realized how it had happened, the short Jap was tossed like a rag doll high over two tables to come sprawling face down on a third, and the tall Japanese gentleman was striding toward the exit.

Okada knew too late that he had committed a fatal blunder. In letting his hate for the spy get the better of his sense he had achieved a headline in every paper in Boston. He might as well have written his epitaph.

Of course he did not escape. The watchman, taking no chances of a second Japanese wrestling match, stopped the fugitive in the hall by suggestively exhibiting his revolver. Being a special police officer he was prepared for emergencies, even in a library.

As a matter of routine Okada preceded the officer to the scene of his recent battle. If the little Jap was injured it meant the hospital for one of the combatants and jail for the other.

Several sympathetic ladies were already offering first aid to the vanquished. His nose was bleeding profusely into half a dozen of the finest cambric handkerchiefs; otherwise he seemed as chunky as ever.

Okada was not without friends, both men and women. The men, having thoroughly enjoyed Okada's expert workmanship, testified that he had justifiably lost his temper when the stocky little Jap persisted in reading over his shoulder and breathing down the back of his neck. The officer saw the point. Finally convinced by the ladies that so handsome a man as Okada —although they did not say it quite so crudely—could be guilty of no wrong, the officer used his common sense and discharged both culprits from the building with a sharp, nasty Irish reprimand. Okada had escaped. Not so the spy. Wherever he walked that evening Okada followed.

About ten-thirty the same evening Dinosaur emerged

from the Directors' dinner a victor. They liked him and he liked them—well enough. His past record as a zealous collector of fossilized eggs in Manchuria and Korea had easily tipped the balance in his favor. Naturally the authorities at the Geological Museum wished, as a matter of local pride, to have a collection of extinct reptiles' eggs second to none in the world. Blye pledged himself to bring back a crate of stone eggs of older and huger monsters than any yet known, or to perish in the attempt. The Directors were not particularly interested in the fate of their ambassador to the past. What they wanted was eggs, and lots of them. They emphasized their wish by promising a bonus of a thousand dollars for each stone egg after the first dozen. Dinosaur hoped to find at least a thousand.

Dreaming of vast nests of dinosaur eggs snugly reposing under the sands of ages, Blye buttoned up his coat and cut across to Commonwealth Avenue. It was an ideal night for a walk, clear and sharp, with a full moon and two glorious planets.

"I'll walk it," he decided, "and let off some steam."

Blye lived in Cambridge in a roomful of maps, geological charts, and thick books. Being a professional collector of scientific curios he had little use for them himself. There was not a fossil in the room.

The part of his unusual profession which took Blye's imagination was not the saleable things he dug up in outlandish places, but the chance it gave him to explore wildernesses of mountain and desert where men seldom venture. Trained as a geologist, he read the face of the earth as a commuter reads his evening paper.

His first expedition to the Chinese deserts as a very subordinate helper to a famous fossil hunter had fixed his ambition for life. He would master, mile by mile, the fascinating beauty of every province in old China and Korea. After the first apprenticeship he struck out for himself, and in three subsequent expeditions made enough to pay his own way for a fourth adventure of pure sightseeing in the less accessible parts of Korea.

He was now twenty-eight, with a fortune of about a thousand dollars, several hundred technical books demanded by his profession, and an alluring possibility of becoming a leisurely millionaire explorer—provided he could collect a thousand stone eggs. It did not seem altogether impossible, although the practically-minded Dinosaur frankly doubted his employers' ability to pay for more than four or five dozen. Any way, he reflected, they were meeting all travelling expenses, and he would have a good time while it lasted. After the fun would be time enough to fret about the future and the inevitable lumbago of late middle age.

Half way across the Harvard Bridge he paused in his rapid walk to lean over the railing and contemplate the quiet beauty of the moonlit river, with the city lights beyond and the dim, mystic masses of the Technology buildings.

"Good enough in its way," he muttered. "The whole of it isn't worth five minutes in the desert or the mountains."

Having expressed his preference for wild nature over tame art, he resumed his walk toward Harvard Square, deep in plans for the expedition. It would be

about four months until the necessary funds became available. In the meantime Blye was to gather his men, collect supplies, and ponder the mysteries of Asiatic geology. There was plenty to occupy his time and his mind. His chief worry was how to spend the four months in patience without squandering the bulk of his savings.

So absorbed was he in his problem as he started across Harvard Square that at first he failed to notice the unusually large crowd clustered about the rotunda.

"Hullo," he said to himself when presently he walked slap into the middle of things, "there must have been an accident. Anyone hurt?" he asked a traffic policeman.

"A Jap was run down. The ambulance just took him to the hospital."

Blye became instantly alert.

"A Jap? How tall a Jap?"

"Just a runt."

"Oh," said Dinosaur.

"Friend of yours?" the officer asked.

"No, but I thought it might have been. I don't really know him. He can't be this one."

"Why not?" the policeman demanded curiously.

"Because the fellow I mean is as tall as I am."

"A Jap?" the officer asked sharply.

"Sure."

"How do you know?"

"Because I've been in Japan—all over it. There are tall Japs and short Japs. The man I mean is high class."

"Come with me," the officer snapped.

"What the devil for?" the indignant Dinosaur protested.

"You seem to know a lot about Japs, young fellow. They will need you as a witness."

"You're crazy. I must have been walking through Central Square when the accident happened."

"Explain it to the sergeant. He's talking to the driver in that cigar store."

"What driver?"

"The fellow that ran over the Jap. Come on."

"All right, you needn't pinch my arm. I'm no blushing ballet girl."

"Who's this?" the sergeant demanded, seeing the indignant Dinosaur being hustled into the store.

"A witness," the officer replied proudly.

"Did you see the accident?" the sergeant asked.

"How could I have seen it from Central Square?"

"He says he knows a tall Jap," the officer interposed.

"What's his name?" the sergeant snapped, fixing Blye with a third degree glare.

"How do I know?" Dinosaur countered, as bland as a buttered muffin.

"You know your own name, I guess," the sergeant suggested with ominous good humor. "What is it?"

"James Blye."

"All right, Mr. Blye, if you don't want to spend the night in the cooler you had better come through with the name of your Jap friend."

"I tell you I don't know it," Blye protested. "Be-

sides, he isn't a friend of mine. This officer got it all wrong."

"Then you set it right, and be damned quick about it," the sergeant advised.

Blye did, to the best of his ability. His story of the encounter with the distinguished looking Japanese gentleman on the library stairway was too simple, in the minds of the police, to be convincing.

"What made you ask me," the traffic officer inquired, "if the Jap this man ran down"—he indicated the whitefaced driver of the fatal car—"was tall?"

"Simply because the man I bumped into was a tall Jap, and you don't see many like him in this country. He made quite an impression on me. Probably I have had him in the back of my mind the whole evening. The man I saw looked like a prince. Can't you see I would be trying to figure out who he is and what he is doing in America?"

The driver came to Blye's rescue.

"Why not call up the Library and find out whether such a man as Mr. Blye describes was seen there earlier in the evening?"

"The Library closed two hours ago." The sergeant looked as stupid as only a police officer knows how to look when occasion suits,

"Try to get the watchman," Blye suggested.

The sergeant brightened. It was clear that if Blye did not object to having his lurid past in the Boston Public Library raked up, he might after all be telling the truth.

After some delay the watchman was unearthed at the other end of the wire. His epic account of the jiu jitsu match in the reading room proved to the police that there was indeed a considerable blaze behind all this smoke.

"Get someone to relieve you," the sergeant ordered the watchman, "and go to the emergency hospital. We want you to identify the Jap before he passes out."

"Can I go home?" Blye inquired.

"Sure," the sergeant agreed. "Where do you live?"

Blye named an obscure street off Concord Avenue.

"All right, Mr. Blye. This officer will go with you to see that you don't lose your way."

"Send the whole squad if you like," Blye returned. "I'm not lying."

"That's what they all say. Good night."

On the walk to his room Blye learned the story of the accident. No wonder the police were interested in his bumping acquaintance with "a tall Jap." The driver of the car, according to the officer, protested his entire innocence, claiming that it was no accident, but a deliberate, and probably a successful, attempt at murder. He was driving past the rotunda at about twenty-five miles an hour when, according to his story, a short, stocky man emerging from the subway was violently pushed by a tall man directly in front of the rapidly moving car. As there was less than five feet in which to apply the brakes, the unfortunate victim of the tall man's devilishness was probably fatally injured. In the horror of the moment the driver failed to notice what became of the tall man, but seemed to

recall an impression of him disappearing through one of the west gates of Harvard Yard. Such was the officer's account. Putting this with the story of the watchman at the library, he not unreasonably deduced that Blye's friend was probably the murderer. Should the watchman identify the short Jap as the minor party to the library fracas, probability would harden into a hanging certainty. He expressed a strong hope that Blye's friend would be standing before long on a trapdoor.

Blye made no comment. If his tall Japanese gentleman were guilty of this atrocious crime, he certainly deserved to hang. The motive, however, puzzled Blye. What could drive an apparently intellectual, cultured man to commit an act which was not only devilish, but foolish? Escape would be impossible. A foreigner with his striking physical appearance must be noticed in any crowd. Blye half expected to read in his morning paper that an unknown Japanese had committed hari kari on the Cambridge Common. Such a man would never be taken alive, and he would die as a Samurai dies.

The officer invited himself up to Blye's room, poked about, and satisfied himself that the young man was actually what he claimed to be,

"They'll want you for a witness," he remarked as he went out.

"All right. Only I know no more about it than you do."

CHAPTER II

TWO PROMISES

"ARE you awake, Miss Geraldine?"

Geraldine Shortridge stirred in her first slumber, dreaming she had heard her name spoken, or whispered. A very faint tap on the door roused her instantly. Again the whisper asked whether she were awake.

"Who is it?" she faltered.

"Satoru."

Her heart bounded and then seemed to stop.

"What do you want?" she choked.

"I must speak to you at once. Put on your dressing gown and come to my study."

"I dare not. Mother——"

"She is asleep. Hurry."

A will stronger than her own got her out of bed, into a dressing gown, and stealing barefoot down the passageway to the stairs. A slit of light from an unclosed door at the foot of the stairs fascinated her as a candle fascinates a moth. She had been hoping and fearing for something like this waking nightmare for the past thirteen months. If the man ever called her she must obey. Was she glad, or did terror at the possible consequences of her madness make the pos-

sibility of love utterly hideous? Then a sharper agony pierced her heart. What if this man did not want her love? Why had he called her?

She pushed open the door and entered his study. The hinges creaked slightly. To her terrified ears the sharp sound was a shriek. Surely her mother must hear it. Then the world would smash to bits, and she would hear nothing more till the last trumpet called her to judgment for the sin she had never sinned. She was just nineteen. To be damned at that age without having lived seemed to the dazed girl the supreme injustice. She had been carefully brought up. Her training now took its full revenge.

"Are you awake?" Okada asked quietly.

"Yes," she half moaned.

"This is not a dream. I have loved you since the day I first saw you three years ago. That is why I have worked for your father."

"Must you tell me now?"

"I must. Will you promise never to tell your parents?"

She hesitated, swaying slightly.

"I promise," she whispered.

"And you will come to me when I send for you?"

"Yes. Where?"

"I don't know yet."

"Are you leaving?"

"I must," he sighed. "Just now I cannot marry you. To stay here longer is impossible. Your mother suspects."

"Where will you go? How can I see you?"

"I don't know. Tell nobody that you have seen me tonight. Promise."

"I promise."

"When I know where we can live in peace I will send for you."

"Will it be long?"

"Perhaps. I can not tell. Go back to bed now. Believe nothing they say about me. I am innocent."

"Oh, what have you done?"

"Nothing. Circumstances are against me. You must believe. I am a Samurai!"

"Are you in danger?" She choked on the question.

"Yes, but I shall escape. Believe in me, and come at once when I send for you. Tell nobody our secret. You know what *I* mean."

He touched her hand, slipped from the room, and let himself out by the front door. He was gone like a shadow.

Geraldine collapsed on the floor, oblivious of everything.

The maid found her, stiff with cold, before Mrs. Shortridge was up. Not being too intelligent, the girl at once called Geraldine's mother. Mr. Shortridge too hurried downstairs fussily. Any human being with a particle of understanding would have dragged Geraldine upstairs and put her to bed before her devoted parents began the day's work. But the maid was congenitally a fool.

Geraldine was ill for a week. She had cracked at last under the sudden tightening of a strain which,

unknown to her conscious self, had been tugging like a demon for two years at her well-disciplined conscience. Now her mother's persistent questions, natural enough perhaps, and her father's blustering incompetence did not exactly help to clear her beclouded mind. All through that terrible week she tossed like a tormented soul on a bed of coals, not comprehending two words of all the nagging exhortations which her parents offered, like a pair of righteous sadists, as a healing balm for their only child's erring perversity.

Through it all she clung to one clear resolution. Though they questioned and cross-questioned her till their tongues rotted she would hold her own. Never would she reveal what had passed between herself and Satoru Okada. Less clearly she kept repeating to herself that, no matter what happened, she must believe no evil of Satoru. This second resolve however was distinctly less firmly fixed in her bruised mind than the first. Already, in the stark reality of her semi-delirium, where truth showed itself naked, she was beginning to doubt that Okada, the sun of her life, was as spotless as he claimed to be.

But of this half-formed doubt her parents learned nothing. Neither Mr. nor Mrs. Shortridge got a coherent sentence out of their obstinate young daughter. She was indeed a first-class Spartan, while they were a sorry pair of third-rate inquisitors, mediocre in torture as in everything else connected with their utterly respectable lives. Their one achievement in twenty-two years of wedded bliss that rose above the drab level

of mediocrity was their joint production of a daughter. Geraldine was of their flesh, undoubtedly, but her spirit was her own.

Mrs. Shortridge can scarcely be blamed for imagining the worst of her own flesh and blood. Hers was the essentially foul mind of the conventional clean-minded person, so-called. She unleashed her inhibitions of twenty-five years to prey upon her 'guilty' daughter. Perhaps her agony was merely a painful outburst of repressed jealousy.

The conduct of Mr. Shortridge when confronted with Geraldine's alleged delinquency can only be called admirable. He swore to shoot Okada on sight the first time he laid eyes on his 'daughter's betrayer.'

It never occurred to either of them that Geraldine might not have been 'betrayed.' To the pure all things are impure.

Mr. Shortridge's righteous rage was rooted deeper than his wife's. He had good reason to be furious. With Okada gone, Heaven only knew where, and determined apparently to stay there in preference to returning to Somerville and facing the music like a man, it would not be long before the jewelry business of Eliakim Shortridge went to the devil. For three years Satoru Okada had been the soul and brain, not to say the financial life blood, of the Shortridge Jewelry Company of Somerville, Massachusetts. And now he had disappeared. It was appalling.

In the three years of his voluntary servitude Okada had put the jeweler, all but bankrupt when they first met, firmly on his feet. The one-horse manufacturer

of impossible gauds in a puritan's taste became a nationally known power in his own province of the business world within a year. The "Shortridge designs," with their ever varying subtlety—all the work of Satoru Okada—were sought after at exorbitant prices from New York to San Francisco. Each was as individual as its maker. His fund of artistic invention, with its exotic touch, seemed sheerly inexhaustible.

Shortridge had paid his rescuer well enough. Okada must have laid away a tidy sum by now, for he seemed to spend nothing beyond the barest living expenses. Where had he gone? Back to Japan? Before he realized what he was doing, Shortridge caught himself offering a silent prayer that the prodigal might return to receive the blessing of a grateful employer's one hundred per cent forgiveness. The man need not have run away like a scared rabbit after his philandering. A marriage would set everything right and be agreeable to all concerned. Shortridge could have kicked him.

The morning after the accident in Harvard Square, Blye rose at six-thirty to see what the papers had to say about it all. Their comments were suspiciously brief. The fracas in the library was not even mentioned. A short paragraph on the third page simply stated that an unknown Japanese had been run down and seriously injured on emerging from the subway. The driver, blameless according to witnesses, had been released on his own bond.

Dinosaur deduced easily enough that the police hoped to catch the suspect by suppressing all publica-

tion of their suspicions. It is a common ruse, and one which frequently is successful with low grade criminals. Blye doubted whether his tall "friend," if guilty, was precisely the kind of fool who would blunder into any trap set by the Boston police. At this moment they were probably watching every approach to the library, and would continue to watch until their man showed up. In that case, Blye imagined, they would still be watching when they began to draw their pensions.

On returning to his room after breakfast, Blye found a message directing him to call a certain number, which he guessed to be that of the Cambridge police station.

"Probably they are going to accuse me of the 'murder,' " he grinned as he took down the receiver. "Well, have you caught him yet?" he enquired when a burly voice at the other end confirmed his guess.

"Who is this talking?"

"Blye—the man you want to see."

"Come to the station at once."

"Won't you send a taxi?"

"If you're not here in ten minutes I'll send the patrol. Get busy."

"They can't patrol me till they find me," Dinosaur reflected. "I'll take my time."

Half an hour later he strolled into the station. His welcome was cordial but rough. Being an experienced young man in dealing with moguls, great and small, he let the desk sergeant bully himself blue in the face before venturing to ask why he had been called. It

appeared that the Japanese consul, Mr. Kameda, wished to hear Blye's description of the distinguished looking gentleman of the library. Blye took his grilling with philosophic calm. It was excellent training for what he would probably have to endure from Boards of Directors, Governors of Provinces, and plain blackguards before he returned to Boston with a fortune in dinosaur eggs.

Mr. Kameda, a slight, gray-haired man with an expression of constant mild surprise on his aristocratic features, received Blye gravely. The audience was granted in a back room of the police station in the presence of several officers and two civilians. The latter were introduced as Dr. Chase and Mr. Kinsey. The doctor was from the hospital where, some four hours previously, the victim of the accident had died, and Kinsey, Mr. Kameda explained, was the gentleman who usually acted as Japanese interpreter in the Boston law courts.

The consul opened the proceedings. He began by asking Blye for a minute description of the 'tall Japanese.' Blye responded to the best of his ability, frequently interspersing Japanese phrases where English seemed inadequate to convey the oriental flavor to his meaning.

"You have lived in Japan?" Mr. Kameda asked in his puzzled way.

"Travelled there, that's all."

"You speak our language beautifully, Mr. Blye," the consul remarked graciously.

"Oh, I wouldn't go so far as to admit that," Dinosaur demurred. "Still I can make myself understood. I shall be obliged if you can do the same."

Mr. Kameda's mild surprise slipped for a second and became quite genuine.

"I don't understand, Mr. Blye."

"Neither do I," Dinosaur admitted. "That's the trouble. Everyone here except myself seems to know something. What's it all about? Can't I bump into one of your men without bringing the whole damned Japanese empire—I beg your pardon, I meant simply the honorable Japanese nation—on my neck? What would happen if I butted into the crown prince? War?"

"You probably have 'butted into'—pardon me if I use your own phrase—a prince," Mr. Kameda answered seriously.

"Well, what of it?"

"That is what I do not yet know," the Consul admitted.

"So you thought I could tell you? Fat chance."

"You have told me a great deal," Mr. Kameda continued. "Such a Japanese as you describe is not of our common people."

"Obviously. I didn't take him for a waiter in a fish parlor."

"And the words, the Japanese particularly, which you used in describing this man, can fit only our highest aristocracy."

"So I thought myself. That's why I used them."

"Then, Mr. Blye, the affair becomes puzzling. There is no such Japanese in America."

"So we have proved that he doesn't exist. This is getting beyond my depth. The man I bumped into felt as if he weighed something. Also, I understand, he put on a pretty fair exhibition of jiu jitsu in the reading room. What about that? All imaginary, too, I suppose."

The sergeant brought them back to earth. As a police officer he was now doubly interested in the vanished Japanese, first as a criminal suspect, and second as a possible evader of the immigration laws. If what the consul said was not mere metaphysics, it followed that at some time this mysterious visitor had slipped into the United States by a back door.

"You must admit," the sergeant expostulated to Kameda, "that all those girls at the library haven't been seeing nothing for the past three years? They agree that this Jap has turned up regularly, once a month for the last three years or so, to paw over the latest stuff on chemistry. They can't *all* be lying."

Kameda's surprise again became genuine. It seemed incredible to him that anyone could be so stupid as this bullnecked policeman. As for Dinosaur, he started as if he had been suddenly pricked with a pin.

"I meant," Kameda explained politely, "that we have no record of any Japanese of high rank living for three years in the United States. The staff at the library, as I know personally, is most intelligent. They cannot be mistaken. A Japanese, doubtless the same whom Mr. Blye has described so well, has visited the library regularly once a month for nearly three years to consult the scientific periodicals. Mr. Blye's descrip-

tion is more valuable than those given by the library staff, because he has travelled in Japan and knows the degrees of our people. I am trying to think who this man may be. None that could possibly be he has left Japan for the past five years."

"Again we prove that he doesn't exist," Blye remarked to the ceiling. "Perhaps he is dead. It was only a ghost I bumped."

Kameda looked at him sharply. Dinosaur appeared innocent, so the consul said nothing in reproof. Presently his attention was riveted by a significant look on the young man's face. Any diplomat would have understood that silent motion to adjourn, and Kameda was a past master in the subtleties of unspoken language. He took the hint immediately.

"I regret, gentlemen," he said, rising and bowing politely, "that I cannot help you to find this atrocious criminal."

For the first time he had slipped in his faultless English idiom. Blye noticed the slip, and inferred that the dignified little man was excited. So much the better; it would be that much the easier to turn him inside out and dispossess him of whatever interesting facts he concealed behind that childlike mask of surprise. For Dinosaur was now keen on the trail of a great adventure. He could not yet say what he expected to find at the end of the trail, but he felt it in his bones that the chase would yield something bigger and more interesting than stone eggs. Then he could tell the Directors of the Geological Museum to scramble their own.

Kameda was bowing himself out. At the door he shook hands with Dr. Chase, and Kinsey, the court interpreter, contenting himself with a bow of the profoundest respect in the general direction of the police.

"Are you through with me?" Blye inquired.

"Till we need you again," the sergeant admitted with a shade of regret.

Dinosaur followed the Consul out of the station.

"Is that your car?" he asked.

Kameda nodded.

"Tell your chauffeur to follow my cab. I'm going to blow myself to a taxi ride into Boston."

"You live in Boston?" Kameda inquired.

"Do I look as big a fool as that?"

Kameda almost smiled. He understood perfectly that this bright young man intended no disrespect to the first city in America, but was merely paying a backhanded compliment to the sagacity of the Cambridge police. If the officers of the law still suspected either Kameda or Blye of knowing anything, their suspicions would only be strengthened by learning of a rendezvous at Blye's room. Without a word the consul slightly raised his hat to Blye, stepped into his limousine, and rolled off. Five minutes later he was following a reckless yellow cab over the Harvard bridge.

Blye discharged his driver on Tremont Street just opposite St. Paul's church, but worship at that particular moment was not his object. Turning down West Street he glanced over his shoulder to see what had become of the astute Kameda. That wily gentleman was carefully selecting two large burnt orange

chrysanthemums from a gorgeous mass outside a florist's. Confident that the consul would contrive to shop his leisurely way along without getting lost, Dinosaur sauntered the length of the street and turned down Washington. A few minutes later Kameda followed, gingerly balancing his chrysanthemums. Blye crossed the street, scanned the bill of fare in a Greek restaurant, and climbed the stairs. Kameda continued his shopping till he too felt hungry. Then he made straight for the restaurant, although he disliked Greek cooking.

Blye had left a message with the head waiter that the gentleman with 'a bunch of flowers, probably,' was to be shown to his private dining nook.

"Well," Blye remarked as Kameda brushed aside the flimsy curtain, "you got here, I see. Anyone with you?"

Kameda shook his head.

"Then we can get right down to business. What will you have to eat? Or don't you eat in heathenish places like this?"

"A pot of green tea and some wafers will do for me," the consul sighed dejectedly. "This place smells of mutton."

"Take a pull at your bouquet," Blye suggested. "You'll need all you have presently. I'm going to have a Greek dinner."

"Why are the police so interested in my unfortunate fellow countryman?" Kameda began after the waiter had left them alone.

"The one in the hospital, you mean?"

"No. That man is no longer interesting. He died early this morning."

"So I heard at the station. As to the other, I can't say. My theory is the obvious one. There have been so many holdups and street corner shootings of late that the taxpayers of this sober city are getting quite excited. As far as I know the police have still to make their first catch of either a common thug or a gunman. At least four street murderers have got clean away almost in broad daylight."

"So the police wish now to do something spectacular to retrieve their reputation?" Kameda suggested.

"Exactly. And that aristocratic friend of mine has been elected to be the goat. God help him, innocent or guilty, if the police ever see him. They will hang him as surely as his name is —— by the way, what *is* his name?"

Kameda gave Blye a reproachful look.

"You heard me tell the police I did not know that such a man is in America."

"Of course. That's why I asked you. What would his name be if he were in the United States? Let us put it that way."

"I thought *you* knew," Kameda retorted.

"So you came here expecting to find out? Is that it?"

Kameda nodded.

"Very well," said Dinosaur. "I hate to disappoint an innocent child. But I doubt whether you're the guileless little creature you appear to be just as I rather suspect that this stuff I'm eating as 'lamb' is

full-grown, sophisticated mutton. Pardon my bluntness."

"Not at all," Kameda murmured. "But you have not told me your friend's name."

"I always tell the truth," Dinosaur explained patiently, "even to policemen, and hold back nothing. When I told those blockheads in Cambridge that this friend of yours is no friend of mine, I meant what I said. Until yesterday evening I never saw the man. Nevertheless I can place his class with mathematical exactness. He is a Samurai, of course, but that is not the main point. His name also is immaterial for the moment. I could find it out in a week if anyone cared to pay me a thousand dollars for my trouble. It would cost quite a bit in cablegrams, but the thousand would leave me a fair business profit—say eight hundred dollars. No, the essential thing in all this is not the man's name, or his aristocratic status in your Japanese social system. What counts is the sober fact that for at least three years he has been dead."

Kameda sipped his sickish-looking green tea before replying.

"Your theory is fantastic. The dead do not read scientific periodicals in public libraries."

"Nor do the living manage to slip through Uncle Sam's iron fence without a ticket of admission; you will have to grant that, or you'll lose your job. That, in fact, is the one knotty point I can't undo. How did this man ever get into America after he had died in Japan?"

"I see your difficulty," Kameda agreed. "Doubtless

if it is possible to evade the immigration law it is not impossible to leave America without attracting attention."

"Between friends, now," Blye began with an ingratiating smile, "do you know how the trick is done?"

Kameda shook his head with an air of mild surprise.

"All right," Blye continued, "I never doubt a child's word. Now let us suppose for the sake of argument that this man did slip into the States like a tarantula in a bunch of bananas. I take it as self-evident that he will be slipping out again the first chance he gets. A man does not go to all the trouble of dying unless he has something pretty big in view. After yesterday's rumpus in the library our unknown friend, whether he killed the little fellow or not, will recognize that his game in America is played out. He can't stay here. Whatever he was up to demanded secrecy. If not, why did he die? Well, can he play the modest violet after a row like yesterday's? The mere fact that a news item like that did not get onto the front page of every paper in New England will make him suspicious. It will tell him as plainly as print that the police, or his secret enemies, have deliberately suppressed the story in order to trap him into showing himself. Their theory is that an apparent lack of suspicion on their part will make him bold or at least careless. His theory is that someone who knows facts to his discredit is using just this stupid trick of the police to catch him. If he is the man I take him to be—mentally I mean—he will have skipped the country by now."

"It should be easy to learn where he lived," Kameda hazarded.

"The police will do that. We can leave it to them. Who was he before he 'died'?"

Kameda shook his head.

"Your theory is romantic but improbable."

"Let us come down to brass tacks," Blye resumed after a pause. "Will you go fifty-fifty with me on this, or would you prefer to have me clean up everything alone?"

"I am afraid I do not understand."

"Then let me make myself clear. If you are not blind you must see that our mutual friend was an important man engaged in important business. Now to an American, important business means money—lots of it. Find out what our friend was doing and you find the root of all evil. It is obvious. And if it should turn out to be false, like most obvious things, we shall have had a good time in proving the whole thing a fake. As a mere incident in the general mess, I may say that an investigation of contraband aliens in the United States might lead to some interesting discoveries."

"They would not interest me," Kameda replied indifferently.

"Oh, yes, they would. If this sort of thing—you know what I mean, is going on in your consular district it shows that you are incompetent. Then you lose your job. But," he added with a pleasant smile, "I believe that you are one of the most efficient consuls in the service of your great country."

"If," Kameda said slowly, "you try to find out this man's past, what do you expect to discover?"

"I haven't the slightest idea," Blye admitted frankly. "My hunch is that it will be worth money."

The consul showed his distaste.

"Money is the American god."

Blye glanced at his companion's chrysanthemums.

"And those, I suppose, are symbols of the Japanese god?"

Kameda nodded proudly.

"Beauty, yes."

"Say prettiness instead. It would fit the facts better. You don't know what beauty is until you have seen a sunrise on the desert. And you can't get into the desert unless you have money. Get the point? I guess there is but one god after all. How would you like a hillside of flaming azaleas, all for your own, in some quiet Japanese village, with a real garden—cherries, the massy pink kind, and no end of chrysanthemums? You don't fritter away your life in a fusty city because you prefer the smell of stale cigarette smoke to the whiff of the cherry blossoms, do you? Why not see life as it is for once, make a little money, and then begin to live instead of merely rusting out?"

Kameda gave his young companion a long, inscrutable look.

"You are discreet," he said finally. "Your tongue is your disguise. I would not trust you too far."

"Thanks," said Dinosaur. "I know exactly what you mean. Do you think I would ever let down a friend, or peach on a pal? You can translate what I say.

Your English is better than mine, but it means the same thing."

Kameda slowly shook his head.

"No," he said. "In a game of wits what is unfair? Nothing. When I said that I would not trust you too far, I meant that if I were playing against you I should stop my ears and watch your eyes. You do not speak with your lips."

"A trick I learned partly in Japan, partly in China. Conversation is useful only on policemen. So you think I am on the square?"

"If you were a Japanese you would be a Samurai."

Blye rose involuntarily. He felt as if he had been saluted by royalty. What the consul had said was the highest compliment in his power to bestow.

"Then you agree to come in with me on this, for the sake of the sport if we get nothing better?"

Kameda delicately fingered the glowing petals of his chrysanthemums.

"Before we left the police station," he confessed, "I decided that *you* should join *me* 'for the sake of the sport if nothing better.' If we are successful, I shall get my hillside of azaleas, and you will see the sun rise many times on the deserts of the orient. Each to his own. Shall we adjourn to a place that smells less like a herd of sheep at shearing time? I promise you, on the word of a Samurai, that I will never betray you."

Blye followed him from the restaurant too dazed for words.

CHAPTER III

THE EMPEROR'S AGENT

"And now," Kameda began when he had made his guest comfortable, "let me tell you what has led me to believe with you that our mysterious friend is 'an important man on important business.'"

They were seated in the plainly furnished sitting-room of the consul's apartment in Back Bay, discussing the mystery which had thrown them together. Although it was a Boston room it might have been transferred bodily from Tokyo or Sendai. Instead of the usual heavy rugs of the average stuffy lodging, a simple Japanese matting covered the floor, and the heavy, overstuffed chairs which seem to be our synonym for comfort, were blessedly absent. A single print, by Hiroshige, Kameda proudly explained, formed the only ornament on the walls. A small bamboo table supported the vase in which Kameda had put his two precious chrysanthemums. There were three plain chairs in the natural wood for possible guests; Kameda never used one when alone. On entering the room Blye had slipped off his shoes according to Japanese etiquette, following his host's example. Then, at a gesture from Kameda, he seated himself on one of the comfortable floor mats. Blye was an

old hand at all this, for he learned quickly when in a foreign country to adopt the customs of the sensible natives. Kameda now sat opposite him, comfortably swathed in a black kimono.

"Mr. Kinsey," the consul continued, "sent for me at one o'clock this morning—I presume you would now say yesterday morning."

"Kinsey, the court interpreter?"

Kameda nodded.

"I was just about to retire when the message came. A Japanese, he said over the telephone, wished most urgently to speak with me before he died. This man had been badly injured in a street accident and realized that he had not long to live. In fact Dr. Chase had told him so.

"I called a taxi and went at once to the hospital, where I was met by Mr. Kinsey and two officers from the Boston police.

" 'He will tell me nothing,' Mr. Kinsey explained. 'As he keeps insisting that we send for you, I believe he may talk if you see him alone. Try to make him tell you the name of the man who pushed him in front of that car. I feel sure he knows.'

"I agreed to do my best to make the unfortunate man talk. Dr. Chase led me to the private room where they had taken the victim, the better to gain his confidence. The moment the man saw me his eyes brightened. Dr. Chase motioned to the nurse to follow him, and I found myself alone with the dying man.

"His voice was low but clear, and his mind apparently quite unclouded. If he suffered he gave no sign,

after the fashion of our people. His first request was that I remove the metal tag which, he said, I would find fastened to a cord about his neck. He regretted putting me to such inconvenience, but it was necessary, he declared, as he had lost all sensation in his arms and hands. The approach of death found him unafraid. Such is the manner of my people.

"I found the metal tag and removed it. You have doubtless seen the metal discs worn as marks of identification by the soldiers of all armies in the great war. This man's tag was of a similar nature, slightly larger than the military kind. At a sign from him I read the Japanese characters stamped on the metal.

"The simple message, non-committal in its brevity, convinced me that I had become a humble actor in a great drama, possibly of international significance. The message was a curt order to any true son of Nippon who should find the metal disc to communicate the fact directly to the Emperor of Japan, with a detailed account of the circumstances under which the tag had been recovered.

"In answer to my request for further orders—for I realized that I was here dealing with a personal agent of the Emperor, and therefore with one whose authority greatly exceeded mine—the man who was about to die shook his head.

" 'Do you know who is responsible for your condition?' I next asked him.

"He swore by an oath that I must believe that he did not. There was nothing further to be said. I asked him if he had any friends—father, wife, brother, who

should hear of his death. His eyes sought the metal disc in my hand, and I saw the struggle of his soul. Loyalty to the Emperor overcame whatever impulse may have moved him for the moment, and he shook his head. Finally I asked him if I might do something to make his last hours happier. He requested that I send him a flower which would make him dream of old Japan. I immediately rang for the nurse, who quickly brought, from the room of a wealthy patient, a white chrysanthemum. Fortunately it is the season for these flowers, so the man died in peace, I have no doubt.

"On going out of the hospital I assured the police that the victim was ignorant as to who—if anyone—had brought him to death. From their faces I saw that they disbelieved me. That is why I was in the Cambridge police court this morning. My word to such men is nothing. What they suspect I do not know. Probably they accuse me of trying to shield a guilty fellow-countryman from justice. But, as I said, I did not learn the name of the man who caused the death of the Emperor's agent. I do not even know whether that death was accident or murder. All that I can swear to is the certainty that the dead man was ignorant of his enemy's name."

"Of course the police won't believe anything you say," Blye agreed. "If they were a little less subtle they might stumble onto something of value occasionally, as we are doing now. From what you say the facts seem fairly obvious.

"Let us assume as a working hypothesis," he con-

tinued, "that the dead man was really shoved in front of that car. Follow the murder theory and see where it leads. If it ends in nothing, we can fall back on pure accident—which will give us less in the end.

"What are the facts? We have a personal agent of the Japanese Emperor shadowing a high class fellow-countryman—a Samurai beyond doubt—and not knowing why he was assigned to that particular job. A number of deductions follow.

"First, our mutual friend is a man of the highest importance to Japan. Otherwise the Emperor would not have kept the affair—whatever it may be—entirely in his own hands. The metal disc would have requested the finder to communicate with the foreign office, or the police, or the diplomatic service of Japan, but not directly with the Emperor.

"There is one theory here that is worth looking at for a moment. Why would the Emperor wish the whole matter hushed up? A possible reason would be that the shadowed man is of the royal blood. He has got himself into some scandal and has left Japan to avoid consequences. The Emperor wishes naturally to keep an eye on his kinsman, possibly with a view to inducing him to return to Japan, possibly to prevent him from further disgracing the Empire. If our man actually is a prince of the blood, no spy or other agent would be told of his true status. The spy would simply be given a few facts to enable him to trace the missing man, and be ordered to report what he found. Under no circumstances would he be permitted to tell foreigners what his business was."

"The theory is plausible," Kameda admitted. "But it is not mine."

"Let's have yours, then."

"Like you," Kameda began, "I accept the theory of murder as a hypothesis. To work out my theory I shall imagine myself in the place of the Emperor's agent. What clues have I?"

"You mean to tracing the man you have been told to shadow?"

Kameda nodded.

"As you don't even know the man's name," Blye replied, "I should say you had nothing to go on. I take it for granted that the Emperor's agent told the truth when he swore he did not know our tall friend's name."

"Still imagining myself in the agent's place," Kameda continued, "I think back and ask myself what instructions I received from our Emperor. They were very definite. I was to trace a nameless Samurai whom I should know when I saw him by certain infallible signs. In some way that is not yet clear I follow the unknown man to America. What tells me that he concealed himself in this country rather than in Europe or Asia is not evident. Let us put that detail aside. Nor is it clear how I follow the clue to Boston."

"Nothing seems particularly clear in your theory," Dinosaur commented critically.

Kameda permitted himself a smile.

"Nothing, perhaps, except what one of your admirable politicians would call the main issue. The clue leads me to what I am seeking. Then, having found

that, it is easy to follow the thread back to the royal hand that holds it."

"No doubt," the pessimistic Dinosaur agreed with open sarcasm. "Only you haven't found what you are looking for. So there is no end to the thread, and therefore no beginning. That's good mathematics, isn't it? "

The consul beamed on him.

"Excellent, but it errs on the side of being too good. I see you are acquainted with what the occidental philosophers believe to be the true doctrine of the infinite, a riddle to which only we orientals hold the key. No, a humbler use of mathematics solves my problem. Do you remember how you solved your puzzles in geometry at high school?"

"It is easy," Dinosaur replied, "after you grasp the trick. Imagine the problem solved, see what must follow from the solution, work it down till you find some simple, familiar fact, and then retrace your steps."

"Precisely," Kameda smiled. "That is what I have done. The fact which I, as the Emperor's agent, find at my end of the long thread is simple, and it is familiar because I have been told to look for nothing else. What is the fact? Our Samurai without a name is identified by his passion for the latest scientific literature, particularly chemistry."

Dinosaur leapt to his feet.

"You've got it! We must find out when a high class Japanese with a professor's knowledge of advanced chemistry left Japan, why he left, and why he never

wrote to the folks at home. Gosh! I'm glad the police invited me down to visit their club this morning."

"The police are brave men," Kameda sighed, "but rather stupid. They suspect me, and yet they tell me what their supposed murderer was reading at the library. And in telling me they told you. Why do not they publish it in the newspapers?" he concluded contemptuously.

"If those fatheads had sense enough to suspect the right parties they would have censored the title of what our friend was reading and broadcast the story of the row. They should have looked up those girls at the desk."

"I saw you start," Kameda remarked, "when the sergeant persisted in telling you the essential secret. If that honest man had not told you about our friend's passion for chemistry, would you have tried to learn for yourself what book he called for at the library?"

Blye laughed.

"If you are testing my honesty, I pass with honors. But I don't have to answer your question. How could I have known anything about the row in the reading room? The papers kept mum about it. Still," he admitted judiciously, "I might have tried to get a line on our man by pumping the girls at the library. That was where I saw him, so it would be natural to begin there. I decided, of course, to kill some time by following up the 'accident' even before I met you. It was too good a hint to be ignored. If I had pumped the information desk everything would have gushed out in bucketsful."

"You pass," Kameda bowed. "It is not often that one meets so honest a young man. But let us begin following our clue back to the hand that holds it. Our Samurai is identified by his chemical erudition; the Emperor's agent has only this fact to guide him. And if murder be the correct theory, it follows that our friend is so jealous of his knowledge that he is unwilling to share it with anyone, even with our Emperor. So he maintains his incognito by disposing of the Emperor's agent. How did he know that the dead man was an agent of the Emperor? To answer that I must pass to the other end of the thread.

"He knew," Kameda resumed, "because his conscience, or his instinct warned him. This is not unreasonable. The dead man was the Emperor's *personal* agent. It follows then that our Samurai and the Emperor at some time were close to one another. It follows too that whatever lay between them was of a strictly confidential nature, not to be entrusted to the regular secret police. So, when our friend found that he was being spied on, he naturally inferred that he had at last been found by no other than the Emperor from whom he was hiding. The murder proves that he was still disloyally unwilling to resume dutiful relations with his proper master.

"The situation is now clear. At some time within the past three or four years our Samurai, or an intimate friend of his, confided to the Emperor certain information of great value. For reasons of his own, our Samurai decided to withhold the whole of this information from his master. This is only a con-

jecture. It may not have been merely information that he withheld but—how shall I say it?—goods, valuables. Whatever it may have been that he refused to give or to share, the Emperor evidently considered as a thing of unique importance. It is for you and me to discover what that thing is."

Blye lit a cigarette.

"By the way," he remarked, "I suppose you yourself are quite loyal to the Emperor?"

Kameda rose and drew himself up proudly.

"I would die at his slightest word."

"Very noble, I'm sure. And I respect your attitude, although it seems to an American hopelessly mediaeval. Still, that's the way you feel. What I want to know is, where do I come in on this? If we find what we're looking for, your Emperor will want it, and you'll hand it to him on a tin plate, just to keep him from crying his eyes out. Then, I guess, he will pin the plate on my chest as a sort of *croix de guerre*. I have one of those blamed things already, and I don't want another. I couldn't hock the one I have for thirty cents."

"You will be rewarded."

"Yes, with the order of the setting moon of the tenth class."

"On the word of a Samurai I promise that you shall have what you ask."

"That goes. I'll ask a lot. Hasn't it struck you that there's a simple way out of all this?"

"What is it?"

"Cable to the Emperor, and ask him what it is that we're going to look for."

"He does not know," Kameda said with childlike simplicity.

"And yet he knows that it is worth half his empire? Sounds pretty thin to me."

"You know that you will die, do you not?" Kameda countered.

"Sure. I'm no immortal."

"When will you die?"

"Some time between now and 2026. If I live beyond December 31, 2024, I'll ask you to shove me in front of an auto going at eighty miles an hour—they will be travelling that fast by then."

"You know the day of your death to within a hundred years. Our Emperor is no more certain about what we must find. Yet he knows that it exists, as you know that you must die. Or rather, he knows that our Samurai knows."

"And he doesn't want the newspapers to get hold of it?"

"Possibly. How can I tell? Can I read the Emperor's mind?"

"It seems to me you're doing pretty well for long distance," Dinosaur retorted suspiciously. "I wonder what you could do at two yards? Ever been that close to him?"

Kameda gave him an inscrutable look.

"I am not close to the Emperor's person."

"That at least is obvious. Well, to get back to the

present, what are you going to do about that metal identification tag?"

"I shall mail it to-night to the Emperor."

"Is that all?"

"It might be well to cable an account of the circumstances."

"It might. Better do it at once. Then if there really are any cogs in this machine we've invented it will start going in a hurry. What do we do in the meantime?"

"Wait."

"For what?"

"News of our Samurai."

"I shan't. I'm going home now to think out a reasonable plan for tackling him. If the worst comes to the worst I shall spend a hundred or two dollars of my reserve to find out about all the missing chemists of the last five years. Well, I'll see you again in a day or two if anything turns up. Here's my address. Call me if you get anything that isn't too close to your Emperor to be shared with the like of me."

He slipped on his shoes and left Kameda wondering.

By assiduously treating the girls at the library to lunches and semi-dinners in expensive little tea-rooms, Blye learned all the superficial facts of the Samurai's periodical sprees on chemical literature, but nothing of any importance. At the end of a week he bitterly regretted all the wasted diplomacy which had earned him introductions to the intellectual young ladies, and ruefully estimated that their charming society had cost him close on thirty-five dollars without netting him

thirty-five cents' worth of real information. They wondered why their pleasant young friend suddenly stopped his informal calls. It would be an exaggeration to say that he left a train of broken hearts in his wake. Yet one or two were badly cracked.

It was Mr. Shortridge who hurled a bomb into the middle of things. Ten days after the disappearance of Okada, the jeweler sat down one afternoon in his private office to think his way out of the general mess in which he found himself. An irritatingly polite letter from a New York firm was the immediate cause of Mr. Shortridge's session with his worries. In answer to an order received some five days previously from the New York firm, Shortridge had set his machinery going to stamp out duplicates of about two hundred of the vanished Okada's most exotic designs. The New Yorkers wanted "Shortridge specialties," and were willing to pay handsomely for a rush order. The nasty letter, which Mr. Shortridge now re-read for the sixth time, pointed out that the exclusive firm on Fifth Avenue had taken it for granted that the manufacturer would understand 'specialties' as high grade examples of his very latest work. The specimens which they had received, due no doubt to the stupidity of Mr. Shortridge's shipping clerk, were all copies of previously issued designs. The firm made it a point of honor to be up to date and frank with their patrons. Therefore they trusted that Mr. Shortridge would rectify his clerk's error at the earliest possible moment, and ship them two hunded individual objects of art not hitherto offered to the trade. In the mean-

time they were returning the mistakes which he had sent.

It was as perfect an example of business courtesy as any in existence, and it was as insulting as only a polished, perfectly unobjectionable letter from an established firm can be. There is a subtle art in the writing of such letters. This art is now commonly taught in schools of business administration. Its basic principles are unfailing politeness of phrase and extreme consideration of the recipient's feelings, combined in such a way as to drive the receiver to homicide, or at least to profanity, without tangible cause. Shortridge was now at the swearing stage.

What had become of that fool Okada? Why had the idiot run away without provocation? Mr. Shortridge's confidence in his daughter's virtue was now restored to par. Geraldine did not act like a guilty sinner, and anyway she was fundamentally a good girl. She could have been little else after such a thorough-going, old-fashioned, New England upbringing as she had received. For fully half a week now Mr. Shortridge had been convinced that Mildred (his wife) was merely an excitable female fool with her absurd suspicions. Okada, Shortridge was ready to take his oath, had only been indulging in a harmless flirtation with pretty Geraldine, and had run off like a frightened hare at the thought of what the eloquent Mrs. Shortridge would say when she discovered his heinous offense. Bah! That wasn't the way to win a girl—run away from her mother. Why hadn't he stuck it out and married her, in spite of private and public

opinion, like a Christian? Shortridge's mouth fairly watered at the ruined prospect of having as a son-in-law such a producer of golden eggs. But was the prospect utterly ruined? No, by God! What were the police good for? They would find Okada and drag him back to amorous and financial duty. Then Eliakim Shortridge could tell those insolent boors in New York to keep their orders and go to the devil.

He seized his hat and rushed from the building. In half an hour he was pouring his grief into the thick, red ear of the desk sergeant at the Cambridge police station. So impressed was the sergeant that he called his chief and the staff of half a dozen plain-clothes men who had been ransacking the vicinity of Boston for the past eight days in a fruitless effort to unearth a tall, high-class Jap.

The chief was distinctly unsympathetic. He sneered at Mr. Shortridge for calling himself an American father. This Jap wasn't as black as a nigger, no doubt, but still you couldn't call him a white man. Did Shortridge mean to say that he would have the fellow back in his 'home' after what had happened? Would he actually let his daughter marry such scum?

In vain did Shortridge argue that Okada was a gentleman. In the heat of temper he even went so far as to assert that all Japanese are not scum, that possibly one or two individuals among them are not so yellow as some native-born Americans, and that possibly one, namely Satoru Okada, was not so vile a human being as certain white slavers protected by the one-hundred-per-cent police. This of course only met

with the outraged contempt which it merited. Its only effect was to inflame the audience of police officers like a herd of mad bulls. Shortridge was forcibly ejected from the station.

True to form, the police now committed their second egregious blunder. Instead of setting quietly about following up Shortridge's bale of clues, they gave the press a detailed account of all that had happened to date in 'the Japanese case.' Their theory, just reasonable enough to be absurd, was that by broadcasting the story over the United States they would enable their intelligent confrères in other states to nab Okada before he skipped the country. They had clean forgotten Dinosaur and Kameda. Seeing only the obvious smoke they walked bang into the fire.

This unlimited publicity provided gratis by the police was just what Kameda and Blye needed to start them off well. Half an hour after the paper appeared on the newstands, both were on their way to the Shortridge house in Somerville. Dinosaur got there first, because he had only a twenty-minute ride in the surface car, while Kameda had first to take the subway from Boston to Cambridge.

Half an hour before Blye rang the bell, a special messenger from the neighboring express office had asked to see Miss Geraldine Shortridge personally. The maid tried to take the package addressed to Geraldine, but the messenger refused to give it up. The label stated plainly that it was to be delivered only to Miss Shortridge.

Geraldine signed the receipt with a shaking hand.

She guessed who had sent the package. It was small, just big enough to contain a watch or a bracelet. Eluding her mother, she flew up to her room and bolted the door.

The neat little box on being opened disclosed no jewel, but something infinitely more precious. A scrap of paper, without signature or other identifying mark, bore in noncommittal print the single word "safe."

CHAPTER IV

CLUES

DINOSAUR was at a loss. He found the Shortridge house in Somerville without difficulty, but as yet he had not thought of a plausible excuse for calling. He decided to walk round the block and pray for inspiration. It would be fatal to be denied admission on the first attempt, because the household would be thoroughly prepared for the second attack. Twenty minutes of tramping only suggested that he present himself as a bond salesman out for clients. He was about to play this poor deuce when he spied Kameda twenty feet ahead of him making for the Shortridge gate. Blye gave chase, and caught the consul just in time to save him the trouble of pulling the bell knob.

Kameda showed no surprise at Blye's presence.

"You could not get in?" he asked.

"I haven't tried yet. I knew you would be here presently so I waited till you came. How are you going to get a welcome?"

"By telling who I am."

"What if they have had enough of your countrymen for a while?"

"Then I must exercise my authority to claim Okada's effects. As a Japanese subject his property is

legally in my keeping until he is found or definitely proved to be dead."

The door opened, and Kameda placed his card on the tray which the maid had snatched on her rush from the kitchen. The Shortridges tried to do things correctly since their rise to comfort, although it frequently strained their resources to make one maid of all work appear as butler, footman, parlormaid, chambermaid, and cook.

Shortridge himself rushed out to receive Kameda. Seeing Blye, who had not presented his card because he had none, Shortridge pulled up abruptly.

"Who are you?" he demanded rudely.

"My name is Blye."

"What the devil does that mean to me?"

Kameda intervened.

"Mr. Blye is my assistant. We have called to inspect the effects of Mr. Okada."

"Oh, you have, have you?"

Shortridge was still smarting from his encounter with the police. The consul kept his good humor, explaining politely that under the law he became the custodian of Okada's property until the missing man or his relatives laid claim to it. The jeweler was mollified.

"Come in here," he said, opening the library door. "I want to talk to you."

The 'library' was a bleak room next to Okada's study. Its only claims to its title were a telephone directory, a library table, and a disorderly assortment of trade journals.

"Have seats," the jeweler invited.

They took a pair of the least uncomfortable chairs and waited developments. Shortridge flung himself onto a stiffbacked antique at the head of the table and faced his visitors.

"You have seen the papers?"

They nodded.

"Then you know all about it."

"Surely not," Kameda murmured gently.

"What did you say, sir?" Shortridge snapped.

"The press has not given any reason for Satoru Okada's disappearance."

"So you don't regard murder of a particularly mean and devilish kind as a sufficient grounds for a man's hunting cover?"

"The murder is only a theory of the police," Kameda objected. "Did you see the crime?"

Shortridge swelled and turned the color of a ripe plum.

Before Kameda could reply, Blye took up the parable.

"As representatives of Mr. Okada we merely wish to know why you turned him out of your house."

Shortridge exploded. Eliakim could curse on occasion in spite of his proud descent from the Pilgrim Fathers, and this was one of his rarest opportunities. Kameda studied the hideous wall paper till the jeweler ran himself out of ammunition. Then he quietly persisted that, as a representative of the Japanese government, he had a right to know how an inoffensive fellow countryman had been treated that he should

disappear like a common criminal—which he was not. If Mr. Shortridge did not care to enlighten them they would collect Okada's effects and take their departure. But, Kameda reminded him, Shortridge, not they, had proposed the chat.

The jeweler glared first at Kameda, then at Blye. Finally he decided to make a clean breast of everything. The thought of that unfilled order from the New York firm drove him to a sort of desperate humility.

"You will be able to find Okada," he began, "if he is still alive?"

"Undoubtedly," Kameda agreed, feeling anything but confident of his ability to trace the elusive Okada.

"He was an extremely valuable man to me in my business," Shortridge went on. "I was just on the point of taking him into partnership when he disappeared."

"That scarcely explains Okada's conduct," Kameda quickly objected.

"I know," the jeweler admitted. "The police have some sense of decency after all. They suppressed the true reason in their account to the papers."

"Which was?" Blye prompted.

Before Shortridge could annihilate the disturber of his peace, a clear voice in the hallway was heard calling "Emily!"—the maid. It was unmistakably a young girl's voice.

Dinosaur studied the chandelier.

"Never mind the reason," he said. "As you say, the police are not so bad as they might be."

Shortridge half rose from his chair, red with anger. There is nothing like the truth for putting a man's back up.

"You needn't throw me out," Blye remarked. "Neither Mr. Kameda nor I will ever mention the matter to anyone, even you. We understand how you feel. Let us get back to Okada. As he was valuable to you in a business way, you would like to have him back?"

To save his self-respect before these 'sharpers,' the jeweler had to reconcile his confessed avarice for Okada and his implied concern for his daughter.

"As my son-in-law," he replied coldly.

Blye stared at him.

"What does your daughter say to it?" he asked bluntly.

"That is none of your damned business!"

"I know that. Still I should like to have an answer to my question just as a matter of human curiosity."

Shortridge reached for the bell. Blye leapt from his chair.

"Better not do that," he cautioned. "Your maid isn't big enough to put me out, anyway. And I don't intend to go until you answer my question. You keep out of this, Kameda," he advised the consul, who also had risen. "Now, Mr. Shortridge, how does your daughter feel about this little marriage you would like to arrange for her?"

"What business is it of yours?"

"None whatever. Only I have seen too many of these 'international' marriages in China and Japan to

let any American girl go into one with her eyes shut. If your daughter is strong for it, all right. But if she is only doing it to help your business, then I shall report it to the proper authorities. Is she of age? All right, you needn't even tell me that. Call her in."

The jeweler rose angrily to face his tormentor, and Kameda made a motion as though to step between the two men. Blye put one hand on his arm to reassure him, and gazing compellingly into Shortridge's purple countenance he ordered, "Call your daughter if you don't want to get into serious trouble. Afterwards you can have me arrested, if you think it wise. I shan't mind: the police are friends of mine."

Shortridge opened the door, shaking with rage and fear.

"Geraldine!"

When she saw Kameda she all but fainted. To her guilty conscience, secure till this moment in the knowledge that Okada was 'safe' as his secret message declared, the sudden apparition of a Japanese in her father's house conjured up little less than a vision of the gallows. She had not yet seen the evening papers, as her father had carefully destroyed the household copy. Yet the memory of Okada's farewell, and his evident desire to escape the consequences of some indiscretion—to put it mildly—as shown by the single word of his mysterious message, hinted only too plainly that if not guilty he was at least suspected of some serious crime. Kameda she mistook for a government agent come to aid the police, represented to her overwrought imagination by Blye, whom she clas-

sified instantly and incorrectly as a plain clothes man. Before she could recover her wits Blye seized his opportunity.

"Do you really want to marry Mr. Okada?"

She had no time to think. If she hesitated they might suspect Heaven only knew what. In her excited condition she temporarily forgot her promise to Okada, or rather the spirit of it, for the letter of his exacting contract had not explicitly forbidden her to acknowledge her love for him. Instinct, as often as not a false guide, prompted her now to tell the truth.

"Yes," she answered defiantly.

Quick to note the flash of surprise on Blye's face, she knew that she had blundered. He immediately followed up his advantage.

"How old are you, Miss Shortridge?"

At this point her father intervened. Her direct answer to Blye's first question had vindicated him. Now he visioned a young man being kicked off the front steps into the arms of an eager policeman.

"Don't answer his questions," he snapped.

"You had better," Blye said grimly. "If you don't do it willingly I know a way to make you talk before the police get here. I know what you're planning, Mr. Shortridge. Now, Miss Shortridge, how old are you? Speak up."

"Nineteen," she flung at him.

"Old enough legally to know better. God bless you; marry your Jap, then. Nobody can stop you!"

"Oh!" she exclaimed, and started from the room. At the door she turned back.

"Where is Mr. Okada?" she asked Kameda.

The puzzled surprise on the consul's face changed to open astonishment.

"Don't you know?" he asked pointedly.

Without a word she turned and fled upstairs, leaving Kameda with a new light on the mystery, and Blye with a confused impression of a strikingly pretty girl in a terrible rage and the heroine in a tragedy which she was too young to understand.

"Are you going to call the police?" he asked Shortridge indifferently. "No? Well, you've got more sense as a business man than you have as a father. This mess wouldn't look well in the papers, would it? I don't blame you. Hold your tongue and I'll hold mine. Now show us what we came for. Where is Okada's room?"

Shortridge led the way to Okada's study and flung open the door. A door on the farther wall led to the missing man's bedroom. The jeweler stood by while Kameda began his rapid inspection.

The study was as barely furnished as a Japanese gentleman's room usually is. On the plain table by the window lay some unfinished designs for jewelry, just as Okada had left them on the night of his disappearance. A glance at these showed Kameda that they would be of no service to him.

"We have no claim to anything connected with your business," he remarked politely to Shortridge. "Mr. Okada's personal effects are all we must take care of."

Shortridge nodded.

"By the way," he asked, "do you happen to know

of a good Japanese artist who could take up Okada's work if he doesn't come back?"

Kameda considered. Going over to the table he picked up one of the incomplete designs and examined it critically.

"This is great work," he said finally. "You will find it difficult to replace Mr. Okada. Artists of his rare talents do not as a rule leave Japan. I shall see what I can do. What salary would you offer?"

"Get me as good a man as Okada, and I'll give him five hundred a month. That's what I paid Okada the last year."

"And before that?" Kameda insinuated.

"He started low—seventy-five a month. But that was when he first came asking for work at the factory. I soon raised him to a hundred, and kept stepping him up every three months as his stuff sold."

"Artists like Okada," the consul mused, fingering one of the designs, "do not often care about money. I am surprised that Okada commercialized himself."

"He was as sharp as a Jew over the money," Shortridge confessed a trifle bitterly. "Never spent a cent except for his board and room here, and always asking for more."

"If I can send you a man at all," Kameda volunteered, playing the jeweler like a fish, "he will be content to work for art and a living. You will give him freedom in his art?"

"Okada had all the freedom he wanted. I never interfered."

"I think I know an artist who will come," Kameda promised.

"When can you let me know?"

"If I cable, we should have a reply to-morrow morning."

"Do it. I'll stand the expense."

Diplomatic relations having been restored, as they usually are, by a promise of mutual profit, Shortridge ignored Blye and followed Kameda like a friendly pup. It did not require much effort on the part of the polite little consul to learn all that Shortridge knew about Okada. The missing man had first appeared at the Shortridge establishment in Somerville about three years previously, representing himself as a designer of jewelry temporarily out of work, and asking the manufacturer to give him a trial. He agreed to work a month for nothing but sufficient to pay his living expenses. Being hard up at the time, Shortridge at first refused point blank. Okada begged to be allowed to show what he could do on the spur of the moment. As this would cost him nothing, Shortridge agreed. The tall, dignified Japanese stranger thereupon seated himself at a workman's bench, and in half an hour, working with great rapidity, sketched the designs of four intricate pendants. The jeweler, in spite of his own atrocious stuff, recognized the designs as being likely to 'go'—they were so freakish, and so utterly unlike anything on the market. He decided to give the artist a week's trial, but he had no ready cash to advance for expenses. The difficulty was solved by Okada's agreeing to lodge at Shortridge's house.

At the end of a month the quiet Japanese was firmly established as a member of the Shortridge household. That he was by instinct and breeding a gentleman was evident from the first. They all grew to like him immensely, and he seemed to reciprocate their regard. The one flaw in his character, according to Shortridge's account, was his avarice. He was always asking for more money, and as he seemed fully aware of the commercial value of his art, it was difficult to refuse his demands. What he did with all he earned was a mystery. Shortridge suspected him of hoarding it like a miser, as on one occasion when he was offered a check in payment of his salary he refused it, saying he could not cash it as he knew no one at the bank. Accordingly he was always paid in currency.

If he ever spent anything except for the barest necessities, he must have done so on his trips to Boston. About once a month he took a day off from his incessant work and disappeared. Shortridge had no idea where he went, and Okada did not enlighten him. He was never gone for more than eight or ten hours, so the jeweler presumed he had been spending the day with Japanese friends in Boston. Okada was not the kind of man, Shortridge confessed, to be asked personal questions. The family often speculated among themselves about their reserved 'guest,' wondering if he were a native-born Japanese or if he had been reared in America. His English was practically faultless, but this might have been due to good schools at home and travel abroad. Okada gave them no help in their difficulty. His evenings were spent quietly with

the family, as if he were a son rather than an employee, or in reading in his own study. He appeared to be an intellectual man and a great student, although his library—as Kameda could see for himself—was remarkably small.

Kameda did see. The missing man's library consisted of half a dozen huge rolls of profusely illustrated 'treatises.' Each was a masterpiece of old Japanese or Korean art, the shortest over a hundred feet long when unrolled, and evidently of considerable age. Any one of them would have been prized by a museum as a rare example of the older type of oriental book. The strange illustrations alone, clearly the work of a master, or of several masters, made them priceless. They were indeed 'museum pieces.' It flashed into Blye's mind when he saw them that they must have been stolen. It was only a guess, but better than nothing as a clue.

In answer to Kameda's diplomatic questions, Shortridge delivered himself of the fatuous theory that these curious rolls were the source of Okada's inexhaustible ingenuity in designing trinkets for wantons. Kameda did not contradict him. He was busy turning them over for some mark which would identify them as the property of the Imperial Museum. Failing on his first inspection to find such marks, he temporarily abandoned his theory of theft. Like Blye, and more expertly in the present instance, he knew priceless curios when he saw them.

"Of course Okada could not take these with him," Shortridge explained.

"You are assuming," Kameda countered, "that he disappeared of his own will?"

"What else is there to assume?"

"He may have been decoyed," Kameda suggested. "That would explain why he left these valuable rolls. They are worth more as objects of art than all the salary he earned with you."

Shortridge's eyes rounded with cupidity.

"I disagree. They were too heavy to carry. So he left them. He was in a hurry to get away."

"Have you any idea why he left?" Kameda insinuated.

The jeweler glanced at Blye.

"Come in here," he said, opening the bedroom door.

Kameda followed, and Shortridge closed the door after him.

"I don't want that young pup overhearing anything," he began with a disrespectful allusion to Dinosaur. "I have good reason to believe," he continued sententiously, "that Okada and my daughter fell in love with one another. And I know," he went on as if he were making an after dinner speech to the Credit men's association, "I know that Okada was a gentleman. What would he do when he found out that Geraldine—my daughter—cared for him? He would leave everything and disappear."

"Why?" Kameda asked innocently.

"Now look here, Mr. Kameda, you are a Japanese, and I don't want to hurt your feelings. But since you have asked me a plain question I shall give you a plain answer. There is considerable ignorant prejudice

in America against white girls marrying orientals—no matter how high class they may be. It is not so in Europe, I believe, but that doesn't help us. Okada saw what public opinion would think of Geraldine if she married him. She would be ostracized. So he did the honorable thing and cleared out."

"Yes," Kameda agreed with a sigh, "and left all those heavy rolls behind for me to carry into Boston and lock up till he calls for them. Can I get a yellow cab out here?"

"I'll call one," the jeweler offered courteously.

When he had disappeared to telephone for a taxi, leaving Kameda alone in the bedroom, the latter lost not a second of time. Like an expert burglar he turned the bedding inside out, felt every inch of the mattress, and ransacked the bureau drawers. Dinosaur intruded on him just as he turned up the rug.

"Hullo," said Blye, "finding what the Emperor asked you to look for?"

"The Emperor?" Kameda queried, straightening up with dignity.

"Sure," said Dinosaur. "He answered that cablegram you sent him last week, didn't he?"

Kameda's childlike surprise became quite pained.

"I should have told you if he had," he said reproachfully.

"Of course you would," Blye agreed heartily. "What did you find just now in the bedding?"

Kameda shook his head mournfully. This young man was suspicious of him.

"Are we not sworn to work together?"

"That is why I am asking you. What did you dig up?"

"Nothing," Kameda confessed.

Shortridge's return interrupted the exchange of confidences.

"Your cab will be here in a minute," he announced.

"Must we take this stuff too?" Blye asked in a bored voice, indicating the few precious articles of Japanese clothing—the curiously woven kimono and the rich scarfs.

Kameda reluctantly admitted that they must. The law compelled them.

Five minutes later they were safely on their way to Boston with all of Okada's effects, including the six huge rolls.

"By the way," Dinosaur remarked, "I suppose you knew what you were talking about when you told Shortridge it is your legal duty to take charge of all this stuff?"

"I hope so," Kameda said devoutly.

"Don't you know?"

"No."

"Then may the Lord help us if Shortridge takes it into his head to consult the police again."

"He will not," Kameda asserted. "They have not treated him courteously in this matter."

"Here's hoping he stays sore at them. What about that artist you are going to send him? Does he exist?"

"Undoubtedly."

"What good can he do?"

"He might become a second son to the Shortridges," Kameda ventured.

"I see, although I don't exactly like the idea of getting Miss Shortridge to tell what she knows that way. One Japanese in her young life is enough."

"I fear you have an evil mind," Kameda said regretfully. "My intention is merely to restore Mr. Shortridge's prosperity in his business, which he has lost through Okada's desertion."

"No doubt," Dinosaur snorted. "I think I shall veto the artist. We can get along well enough without him."

"It will be harder," Kameda sighed, "in spite of all these 'effects'—I believe that is the correct legal term." He indicated the priceless rolls on the floor of the taxi.

"From what I've seen of you so far," Blye retorted, "difficulties act on you like a tonic. So I put my foot down on that artist. Let Shortridge whistle for his talent or go broke. That goes."

"Very well," Kameda agreed. "No young man of your age is proof against a pretty face."

Nothing more was said until they had carried Okada's effects up to Kameda's apartment.

"Well, what about it?" Blye demanded. "Can you decipher this stuff?"

"I can try," Kameda admitted.

They spent thirty-six hours over those rolls, sending out for refreshments from time to time, but resolutely

refusing to sleep. The end of their labor found them little wiser than when they began. If Kameda understood what he saw, he proved himself a past master at dissimulation. Blye was almost convinced that the little consul was as completely in the dark as he was himself. They decided to give up the problem temporarily. As a last preliminary to their researches, they cut all of Okada's clothing to ribbons. They found precisely nothing but clothing.

"I'm going home to sleep it off," Dinosaur announced.

He stumbled off, his mind a jumble of incomprehensible pictures and meaningless characters. The moment he was gone, Kameda slipped out to the cable office.

CHAPTER V

INCOGNITO

THE next five weeks were the most exasperating that Blye had yet lived through. To satisfy the directors of the Geological Museum he was forced to make more than a show of getting ready for his hunt for dinosaur eggs. The directors were nice old gentlemen, but unduly fussy. Their only safe dissipation at their advanced age was a committee meeting. Whenever time oppressed them, they called one another on the telephone and proposed a meeting to discuss the Asiatic expedition. Dinosaur was invariably asked to attend, and as invariably accepted the invitation. His salary was to be retroactive as soon as the funds became available, so that he was now technically an employee of the Museum. Whether he liked it or not, he had to attend those endless meetings to discuss the best brand of water bottles for the desert, or the correct muffler to be worn about the neck at high altitudes. His replies frequently puzzled his would-be advisors. They were thinking of fossilized eggs, Chinese bandits, cholera and infected vermin, while Blye's mind was fixed on the pictured rolls which Kameda declared were extremely ancient examples of Korean literature beyond his ability to decipher.

Once, in answer to an old gentleman's question what was the best kind of belt to be worn next to the skin as a decoy for vermin, Dinosaur absently replied *"De re metallica."*

The old gentleman looked incredulous.

"Surely, Mr. Blye," he expostulated, "a classical Latin treatise on metals and mining is not the proper thing?"

"Of course not," Blye agreed. "Who said it was? I always use a strip of red flannel myself, like the Japanese soldiers."

"But you said *'De re metallica.'* "

"My mistake. A slip of the tongue."

In fact Blye's mind for some weeks had been haunted by an elusive likeness between certain of the drawings in the rolls and the quaint illustrations of the early Jesuit editions of the old Latin work on metals. He could not trace the resemblance definitely. Nevertheless he sensed strongly that something more significant than coincidence underlay his feeling.

As a student of geology he had studied this old Latin classic on things mineral, and now possessed several editions with reproductions of the curious woodcuts which embellished the early Jesuit works. On returning to his room late at night after a long evening spent with Kameda in poring over the Korean rolls, he would take down these books from his shelves, and lose himself for an hour or more in the subtle details of the old drawings. An illustration in an old book frequently was intended to convey more than the simple image of what it purported to represent.

Blye began to suspect the Jesuit artist of deliberately using his pictures as a medium for a profound commentary on the text. The very scrollwork in the borders seemed to hint at some esoteric meaning, but what it might be he failed to grasp. Again, there was a striking similarity in the faces and postures of the miners in the book on metals to those of certain idealized—although hideously ugly—characters depicted in the scrolls.

Kameda claimed at first that the Korean artist was writing an extensive theology, and that these creatures of his imagination were legions of gods. Gradually he modified this opinion in favor of a book on assorted Korean devils. To Blye neither interpretation seemed even plausible. Although inhumanly hideous most of the faces were to his eyes unmistakably portraits drawn from life. The strange postures of the supposed men, he maintained, were not mystical representations of magical ceremonies but conventionalized attitudes of hard, everyday labor. From first to last he stoutly maintained that the 'treatises' dealt with some intensely practical concern of common life.

The cryptic text of the scrolls gave the baffled investigators no help. Kameda was a highly educated man, but in a modern way. His training for the consular service had been largely in modern languages, especially English. In his busy life he had found little time for antiquarian researches.

"Can anybody read this infernal stuff?" Dinosaur asked one evening in desperation.

"Undoubtedly," Kameda assured him.

"Who?"

"Okada, I suspect."

"I guess you're right. But I meant, do you know anyone else who can read it?"

Kameda's face became suspiciously innocent.

"Any Japanese scholar in our ancient history should be able to decipher some of it."

"Then why don't you get hold of one?"

"And tell him our secret?"

"We haven't any secret. We shan't have one till we read this. So we might as well call in the scholars. I'll tell you what," he exclaimed, brightening, "let each of half a dozen sharks at this sort of stuff read a yard here and there. Then we can put their results together. No one man need see more than three consecutive feet of a roll at any time."

"I had thought of that," Kameda agreed modestly.

"Then why didn't you do it, then?"

"I shall, as soon as the scholars arrive."

"Oh, so you did cable to the Emperor. What did he say?"

Blye could read nothing on his companion's inscrutable mask. Kameda shrugged his shoulders slightly.

"Nothing," he said.

"Which may mean everything. I see you want me to understand it in the sense that the Emperor said nothing because he wasn't asked to say anything. You didn't cable? All right, let it go at that. I'm asleep."

"I did cable," Kameda said slowly, "for an artist."

"Look here," Blye retorted, "I thought we agreed to cut that out."

"This man will not live at Mr. Shortridge's."

"Will he work for Shortridge?"

"How can I tell? If the wages are good he may."

"Have you told Shortridge this artist is coming?"

"Certainly."

"When were you out there? At Somerville, I mean?"

"The evening you went home to sleep after we first worked on these scrolls."

"I see. You don't let the grass grow up between your toes, do you? What did Miss Shortridge say to it?"

"I did not see her."

"I'll take your word for that. What did Shortridge say?"

"What would such a man say?" Kameda parried with an expression of intense disgust. "You have read Hamlet. Do you remember Polonius?"

"Made to be kicked," Blye exclaimed viciously. "I always thought till I met Shortridge that such men never existed."

That night he found it impossible to concentrate his mind as usual on *De re metallica.* Disgusted with himself for being an impressionable young fool, exasperated at the commonplace world of virtuous young women and pandarous old men for being capable of interfering with his work, he kicked over a chair and went straight to bed.

For the next week he attended strictly to the directors' business, except at night, when he plunged furiously into the intriguing woodcuts. The directors

found him keener and much shrewder than they had suspected him of late. During the week they came to a final agreement as to the territory in which the expedition was to operate. At first they had held out strongly for Manchuria as it was there that the dinosaur eggs of their deadly rivals in New York were discovered. Dinosaur ably convinced them with a wealth of geological maps, treatises on historical geology, and impassioned exposition that Korea as an egg nest for extinct reptiles must be incomparably richer than Manchuria. Moreover, he elaborated, the New York expedition had been so ruthlessly efficient that probably there was not a stone egg left in all Manchuria for Boston's breakfast. The very success of the rival expedition, he argued, was the best possible reason for giving its territory as wide a berth as possible. It was queer logic and perhaps queerer geology, nevertheless it did its duty. The directors could not have been paid to send an expedition to Manchuria. Korea, they vowed, was their first, last and only true love. Thus the week was not wholly wasted.

Nearly seven weeks had now passed since Kameda sent his first cablegram—he had sent several—to Japan. As the days wore on he began to show signs of intense nervousness. When Blye was not with him he spent hours fussing at the arrangement of the furniture in his room. This chair did not exactly suit him, or that one seemed incongruously out of place. The matting was sent out twice and replaced by chaster

patterns. A large, handsome portrait of the Emperor, to Blye's amusement, now made its appearance on the wall in the place of honor formerly occupied by the Hiroshige print. Blye remarked caustically that Kameda's taste was degenerating under the strain of too much scroll work. Kameda retaliated by hinting that a little less of Dinosaur's company would be a welcome change.

"All right," Blye laughed, "I won't intrude on your lady."

He took himself off to a directors' meeting, wondering just what his companion in adventure had up his sleeve. He was not deceived by Kameda's reticence. No lady was to be the consul's visitor, of that he felt certain. If he could do so without being discovered he resolved to watch the consulate between shopping expeditions for the Museum authorities.

Kameda's preparations were completed the same day that an interesting event took place in San Francisco. California has never been over-cordial to orientals, so it was rather remarkable that the Governor of the State should accompany the United States Immigration officers to the Japan Dock to welcome a small delegation from Nippon. Perhaps none of the reception committee were keen for their job, nevertheless they did it with an air of cheerfulness in obedience to a pointed request from Washington. The delegation, of two Japanese only, was to be accorded every courtesy. Their passports, according to Washington, might be taken as correct. The delegates themselves

were to be comfortably installed in a private car and rushed to Boston as fast as steam and steel could carry them.

At the dock the Governor introduced himself to Messrs. Doi and Tanabe and asked what he could do for the 'delegates.' Mr. Tanabe, a shy, reserved little man with snowy hair and the absent air of a professional student, allowed his companion to do all the talking. Mr. Doi, a young aristocrat, slightly taller than the average Japanese, replied in rather halting English that they would like a train for Bos-ton. The Governor assured the visitors that steam was up and the private car in readiness. If they would cross the bay with him on the ferry to the Oakland Pier they could be on their way to Boston in half an hour. Mr. Doi bowed.

At this point the immigration officer remarked that, according to his instructions from Washington, it would be unnecessary to examine their passports. Mr. Doi showed his surprise. The officer explained that although the waiving of this formality was unusual, if not quite without precedent, he was only executing the order of his superior in Washington. He had completely missed the point of Mr. Doi's surprise. That young aristocrat was astonished, not at the waiving of the technicality, but at the indecency of even mentioning a passport to one of his rank. Being a gentleman he ignored the officer's obtuseness and followed the Governor to the waiting limousine which was to whisk the party off to the ferry building. Four and a half days later Messrs. Doi and Tanabe were in Boston.

Dinosaur was not officially on the Boston reception committee to greet the distinguished foreigners. Unofficially however he contrived to be at the South Station when their train pulled in. This was not coincidence, but the inevitable result of using his head. For a small sum he had secured the services of four street arabs to keep their eyes on Kameda's movements. They were to call Blye by telephone at his lodging—the landlady would know how to reach him—if Mr. Kameda visited any of the steamship docks or either of the railway terminals. The afternoon of the momentous telephone call from his landlady found him chatting as usual with the directors. With a hurried excuse about a sick friend, he left his employers talking and jumped into a taxi. He arrived at the South Station five minutes before the limited from Chicago rolled into the station.

His faithful arab pointed out Kameda nervously pacing back and forth before the iron railing. Dinosaur blessed the boy and gave him a new five dollar bill. Then, from an inconspicuous post among the crowds waiting to welcome their incoming friends, he turned his full attention on Kameda.

The consul's every movement was an evidence of intense nervousness. As it takes a great deal of torture to make an oriental show any human feeling, Blye naturally wondered what his fellow adventurer had on his mind. He soon learned. The limited hissed its way into the station and Kameda, passing the gateman without permission, darted down the platform to the last car. Blye followed, confident of his ability

to keep out of sight in the crowd of passengers from the train.

Two Japanese emerged from the last Pullman, the first a young man, his companion a white haired bit of old Japan.

"I wonder which is the 'artist'?" Blye muttered to himself.

It developed later that the young man, Mr. Doi, was the 'artist.' The old man's profession remained obscure; Kameda confided when the proper time came that this shy old chap was Mr. Doi's personal servant. Needless to say, Dinosaur treated this confidence as a rather mediocre attempt at pure fiction.

For the moment he stood fascinated, watching Kameda's antics. As the aristocratic Japanese descended the steps of his private car, Kameda made a queer motion with his whole body as if he were about to prostrate himself on the station platform. Blye saw the young man's lips move rapidly, as if he were giving a sharp order, and Kameda instantly snapped into an erect human posture. The old man stood patiently in the background till Kameda had humbly accepted what Blye guessed to be a severe lecture from the young aristocrat. Then he joined the other two, and all three walked down the platform to the exit, talking earnestly.

Blye followed at a safe interval, and saw the trio get into the consul's limousine.

"It's no use following them now," he muttered. "What would the papers give to get hold of this? The U. S. Government must have let him in on the

quiet. I've stumbled onto a bigger thing than I guessed. What's next?"

He was roused from his brown study by the approach of his tattered arab.

"Anything more, mister?"

"Tell the others to keep watch as before. I want to know who goes into Mr. Kameda's house, and who comes out—Japs only, I mean. Find out where they go. Telephone a report every evening at about ten o'clock."

"How much do we get on this?"

"The same as before, five dollars' bonus if you make good. Don't give yourselves away."

The arab grinned.

"Who'd have us?"

Dinosaur admitted that the four would be dear at nothing, and hurried off on his own business. In a game such as he was playing now he must follow every clue to its end, and test every hypothesis. What he was about to do required more nerve from a young man of his temperament than going 'over the top.' He buttoned up his coat and started for the scene of his next engagement. He wished to get to Somerville while the afternoon was still young and ladies might reasonably be expected to stroll forth to take the air and view the displays in the shop windows. He plunged into the Cambridge subway prepared to face the most discordant music.

The surface car delivered him safely, but with shaking knees, at Somerville. He began to wish the journey

had lasted a week. His plan was founded only on a guess, but it was a conjecture which, if true, it would be fatal to ignore. If his theory were unfounded in fact, he would probably make an enemy for life. Clearheaded as usual, he preferred the enemy to ruining his chances of success in the great adventure.

Turning down the Shortridges' street he rapidly scrutinized all pedestrians in sight. Not seeing the one he wanted, he loitered back and forth across the end of the street for two hours. At last his patience was rewarded. He saw Geraldine emerge alone from the Shortridge house for her afternoon shopping tour. As she faced toward the avenue he quickened his pace, glancing back occasionally, until she turned the corner. Then he slackened until her brisk young gait overtook him. He lengthened his stride, joined her, and raised his hat.

"Good afternoon, Miss Shortridge."

When she realized who had greeted her she stopped short, white with anger. Blye acted instantly.

"I have news for you from Mr. Okada. Come into this tea-room."

The last tinge of color left her lips. As she felt his hand on her arm—he feared she was about to faint—she recovered her senses. Jerking herself loose she faced him, hatred in every feature.

"You lie!"

"Technically you are right," he admitted coolly. "I had to do something to attract your attention. You must admit it worked."

"If you don't leave me alone I shall call that policeman!"

Dinosaur studied the traffic cop briefly.

"No, you won't," he said. "Come in here. I'm not trying to 'mash' you. And I do have news of Okada that you should hear."

For half a minute she struggled with her dislike for the young man before her. Finally she yielded.

"What is it?"

"I can't tell you here, for obvious reasons. Some of your friends might see us talking. It is rather a long story."

"Why do you want to tell me?"

"Personal profit. What helps you helps me. You want to know about Mr. Okada. I want something else. It just happens that the two jibe. If you don't believe me you may be sorry all your life."

"Very well."

She preceded him into the tea-room and chose a table in the farthest corner.

"Tea for two," he ordered.

"Now," he began, while the waitress was busy with their order, "I may be dead wrong on the whole business. First let me apologize for what I said the other night. Your personal affairs are none of my business."

"I don't want your apology," she flashed. "What have you to tell me about Mr. Okada?"

"Just this. I suspect that you will be asked a lot of questions about him before very long."

"By whom?"

"A Japanese. A young man, high class, like Okada. He is younger than Okada and not so tall. Or it may be by an old fellow with white hair, but I don't think so. The young fellow is my guess. The other one doesn't speak much English, I should judge. It wasn't taught as a spoken language in the Japanese schools when he was a boy. So you will probably be questioned by the young man. I believe he will talk to your father about working for him as a designer."

Again her face lost all color, and Blye watched her curiously. Was love for Okada the sole cause for her perturbation? Blye could not decide. The arrival of the waitress with their tea was a welcome diversion.

"Better have a stiff cup," he advised, pouring her tea. "It will warm you up. You look cold."

She shuddered as she gulped the steaming liquid.

"Who told you?" she asked when she had recovered her grip.

"No one," he confessed frankly. "It is a pure deduction from observation."

"Observation of what?"

"Never mind. It would not help you if you knew. Would you object if I gave you a little advice?"

She ignored his question and drank her tea.

"As you don't absolutely forbid me, I shall go ahead. Please believe me when I say that I am doing this for my own advantage. This is my advice. Don't answer a single question either of those men asks you."

"Why?"

"I can't give you a definite reason."

"Well, give me any reason you can."

"My feeling is that whoever asks you any questions is no friend of Okada's. This is only a guess, and I may be totally wrong. Still, if I were you, I should refuse. Look out for any Jap calling himself an artist."

Blye was naturally a close observer, especially of human emotions. The distracted girl before him, nervously crumbling a wafer, was the picture of physical and mental misery. He longed to offer her some comfort, and help her out of her trouble, but common sense warned him that his efforts would only be rebuffed. Presently she involuntarily put her crumpled handkerchief to her left cheek, and sat brooding miserably.

"Toothache?" he asked sympathetically, for want of something better to offer in the way of condolence. To his intense astonishment she started violently. Her hands trembled as she groped for her purse and adjusted her hat preparatory to leaving the tea room.

He followed her to the door, opened it for her, and raised his hat.

"Good afternoon, Miss Shortridge. This has been very pleasant."

Without answering she hurried from the place and retraced her steps toward her house. As she turned the corner Blye noted that she was holding her handkerchief to her left cheek.

"I hope I haven't paid for a toothache for the poor girl," he sighed as he walked to the nearest car stop. "Those cakes weren't so very sweet."

That evening, promptly at ten, his faithful helper

called up to say that the three Japanese gentlemen entered Kameda's apartment about four o'clock, and had not since emerged. As he had lost sight of them after they left the station in Kameda's car, he guessed they had spent the afternoon lunching and talking. Dinosaur agreed.

It was too late to call on the consul, so he spent the hours till midnight studying the Jesuit woodcuts. They had begun to yield some meaning, and he now felt hopeful of finally tracing their elusive connection with the Korean artist's work on the scrolls.

"If I'm on the right track at all," he thought as he got into bed, "that white-haired old Japanese gentleman is translating one of those scrolls aloud to an audience of two at this very instant."

He was not far off. His error lay in overestimating the size of the audience. The venerable and erudite Tanabe was reading aloud to the aristocratic young Mr. Doi alone. Mr. Doi had intimated earlier in the evening that a solitary walk would be beneficial for Mr. Kameda's health. The consul was still walking.

A few days later Blye thought it would be well to pump Kameda. Accordingly he paid an informal evening call. The janitor obligingly summoned Kameda into the hallway on the pretext that a man who would not state his business wished to see the consul for a moment. Kameda excused himself and followed the janitor.

"Well," Dinosaur grinned, "are they keeping you pretty busy?"

Kameda seemed provoked.

"Why did you call?" he asked.

"Hospitable, aren't you? Since you ask, I'll tell you. What is the young artist's name?"

Kameda looked actually blank for a moment.

"Mr. Doi," he finally acknowledged.

"And who is the old fellow with white hair?"

"Mr. Doi's servant."

"Thanks. That's all I wanted to know. I won't ask you to strain the truth any farther this time. I shall be back when you're feeling looser. Good night."

"Good night," Kameda responded with an ill grace.

CHAPTER VI

ENTER THE U. S.

Mr. Kameda was feeling distinctly chilled. His fervent loyalty, he imagined, was being snubbed. He had gone to no end of trouble to put the Emperor in touch with what, no doubt, he earnestly desired to hold in his hand, and here he was being bossed about like a potboy by the Emperor's shadow, young Mr. Doi. Of course he had no right to complain, because Mr. Doi could recommend the consul's instant dismissal from his important post the moment Kameda caused him the slightest inconvenience. Under the feudal system of government which still is the spirit if not the letter of Japanese politics, Mr. Doi was Kameda's overlord in the strictest sense. To protest at his rather priggish treatment would only be an act of the supremest folly. So Kameda hid his sulks and tried to use his eyes.

Old Tanabe proved sociable enough in a guileless, second-childhood way, except on the topic of the ancient Korean scrolls. He, too, had his rigid orders from Mr. Doi. It might have cost him his life, and it certainly would have deprived him of his liberty, if ever he had been so rash as to divulge the intensely interesting and curious things which he read aloud without compre-

hension for many hours a day to the alert young Mr. Doi. Kameda got nothing out of him but platitudes about the weather and the Emperor's health. Sooner or later Kameda would be forced to take Blye more unreservedly into his subtle oriental 'confidence.'

The day after old Tanabe finished his verbal translation of the rolls—it proved to be a ten days' job, Doi curtly told his subordinates to amuse themselves until his return from Washington, D. C. He did not deign to say what might be the nature of his business at the Capital. A telegram would give Kameda sufficient notice to meet his train on returning. For the moment he would thank the consul to see about transporting his august person to the proper railway station. Kameda saw him safely installed in a parlor compartment and left the station with a sigh of relief to hunt up Dinosaur. He found the young geologist among his maps, poring over his probable route in Korea.

Blye glanced up indifferently when his landlady announced "a gentleman to see you, Mr. Blye."

"Well," he remarked to Kameda, "since you've come, make yourself at home. It's more than you asked me to do the last time I was at your place."

Kameda approached the work-table and asked if he might see what Blye was doing.

"Studying my geography lesson," Blye explained. "Recognize this?"

Kameda nodded.

"The northern mountain region of Korea where it joins Manchuria. That map cannot be accurate. There

has been no full survey either of northern Korea or of southern Manchuria."

"That is just what makes it so interesting. Whoever drew this filled in most of it from imagination. You see," he went on, "an arrangement of rivers, lakes, and igneous mountains like this," he indicated one romantic-looking section of the chart, "is a geological impossibility. The crust of the earth has thrown some wild fits in its time, but it never threw so rare a convulsion as this. You Japanese, if you will pardon me for saying so, are awful liars about the continent of Asia. This map was drawn by one of your high-toned geographers, a member of your diet, with the order of the rising sun of the first class and all the rest of it. Now why, do you suppose, did he go out of his way to lie like this about poor Korea? In his book he claims to have visited these mountains, or at least to have triangulated their outer wall. Do you know anything about a map? All right then, just examine those contours, and tell me how your countryman ever got to the top of this plateau with all its glacial lakes."

Kameda bent over his fellow countryman's carefully drawn map to scrutinize the doubtful details. He had only an amateur's knowledge of geological maps, yet even he could see that the terrain was highly unusual to say the least. The contours indicated unbroken precipices, unscalable peaks, and a lofty plateau thickly dotted with small lakes. If the lakes were more than mere figments of the Japanese geographer's imagination, how had he scaled those sheer barriers to observe them? Kameda saw the point. Regretfully he admitted

that his compatriot had been more interested in gaining his decoration for meritorious service to the empire than in expanding the kingless domain of truth.

"All these earthquake fault lines," Blye explained, "and the contours along them show where the crust cracked away from the plateau and left it hundreds of feet higher than the surrounding country. Probably it is a core of basalt, harder and tougher than what fell away from it in the earthquakes. If your prize geographer ever got to the top of it to see all those pretty little lakes he must have used an airplane. That, however, is out of the question. There is no chance to land, unless he lied again, on this jumble of rocky hills and volcanic tumuli all round the plateau. How did he take off in his machine? He didn't; the only wings he had were those on the back of his imagination. This whole map is the finest example I ever saw of dishonest geology. If the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey did a job like this on the interior of Alaska the whole staff would receive the order of the rising boot."

Kameda tried valiantly to uphold the honor of Japan.

"Perhaps this is a deduction from a theory."

"In that case he should have said so plainly, just as I did when I started from the hypothesis that our friend Okada is a murderer, and deduced the fact that your Emperor would give his ears to know what became of the mysterious criminal. However, let that go for the moment. I shall come back to it presently. Take another look at this map. All these 'intrusions'

—masses of upthrust rock, are described by your eminent geographer as belonging to the Archaean."

"Another lie?" Kameda murmured.

"Probably. The Archaean is the oldest of all geologic ages; its rocks are so ancient that every stone too old to classify decently is lumped with their great unknown. Now, according to your truthful scientist, all these smashed pinnacles and up-ended slabs of archaean rock are practically unweathered. Yet he plants glacial lakes on top of the plateau. It follows, in his crazy geology, that an ice cap roosted on the plateau and carefully avoided the sharp peaks all around. I never knew before that ice is so sensitive."

Kameda brightened. He detected a flaw in his skeptical young fellow adventurer's reasoning.

"Perhaps the big earthquake happened after the ice age," he suggested. "The plateau is part of the country as it existed before these old rocks—what do you call them?—archaean, broke through the face of the earth."

"Perhaps, as you say. If so, it contradicts all theories of the geology of Korea."

"Theories are made to be contradicted."

"So are maps. And I'm going to contradict this one."

"When?" Kameda inquired innocently.

"When I finish dredging this sandy desert," he indicated a modest whitish section of the map, "for dinosaur eggs. Your friend's weird geology is within two weeks' easy march of the egg nest. Want to come along? I may need an interpreter."

Kameda's innocent barn-owl expression became blanker than ever.

"But I do not speak the Korean."

"No, but you could pick it up much faster than I might. Besides, I may want to talk at length with one or two Japanese before I get back. My own knowledge of your erratic language is good enough for camps, but not quite up to court standards. Just think how embarrassed your Emperor would be if I made some terrible break imagining I was using the correct small talk about chrysanthemums. Such things have happened. There was the Englishman, for instance, who asked the old Dowager Empress of China whether——"

"I know," Kameda interrupted hastily. "It was scandalous."

"I'll spare your blushes," Blye chuckled. "Well, how about it? Will you help me to hunt for reptile eggs?"

Kameda passed into a reverie.

"Why not?" he said at length.

"Yes, why not? The Emperor hasn't been treating you very well of late, has he?"

Kameda was genuinely shocked.

"Do not jest about that," he said quietly, but firmly, "or we cease to be friends. My one loyalty is to my Emperor."

"Still, your Emperor may make mistakes occasionally? You will admit that?"

"If so," Kameda answered with dignity, "my life is his to correct the error."

"I see," said Blye. "That smart young fellow who

lectured you at the South Station—oh, I saw it all, I'm not so sleepy as I look—doesn't know everything. You think he and the old chap who came with him are making a mess of things. By the way, what status has the old man in relation to the young fellow? I couldn't quite make him out. Your actions gave the other one away like a Hearst headline. No wonder he called you down. Who is the old boy, any way?"

"Tanabe, our greatest archaeologist."

"Of course; he would be. So he has been reading our precious rolls to the——"

"To Mr. Doi," Kameda interrupted hastily.

"Very well, to 'Mr. Doi.' And Mr. Doi told you to take the air while the reading was going on. Is that it? I should be sore myself."

"I am not sore, as you put it. I try only to undo the error into which Mr. Doi is falling."

"Mr. Doi's error? What about the Emperor's?"

Kameda shook his head.

"I must not talk about it," he said.

"Of course not, unless you like. It isn't necessary, however. Let me put it into words for you. If we set young Doi right we thereby save the Emperor's face. I think we understand one another. By the way, I knew you were romancing the other day when you told me Doi was your imported artist, and old Tanabe his servant. I saw too much at the South Station. So you will excuse me for asking you to get down to facts now, and tell me why you want to keep in with me. What, as one man to another, is your motive beneath all this professed interest in my egg hunting?"

The little man seemed strongly moved. As he paced the narrow room in silence, Blye watched him surreptitiously but microscopically. He had seldom seen an oriental so unguarded in the expression of his emotions. In spite of himself he half believed that whatever Kameda might say when he finally made up his mind to speak would be at least one per cent true. At last the consul halted and delivered himself of the truth that was in him.

"Your civilization," he began, "is great. In some ways it is the greatest in the world. By your civilization I mean the occidental. Ours is different. We of the orient are an older people. Some say we have slept for the past two thousand years. But if we slept, our dreams were good. We dreamed of things you western peoples will never understand."

"Until we substitute opium for tobacco," Blye hazarded, lighting his pipe.

"That may well be. What I speak of is not an opium dream. It is a vision that Europe once saw, in the middle ages."

"Feudalism," Blye guessed.

"A term of reproach," Kameda objected. "Say chivalry instead."

"The two are hardly the same. For the sake of argument, I'll let it go at chivalry. What about it?"

"The chivalry of the Samurai was the greatest thing Japan ever discovered," Kameda answered proudly.

Blye stared incredulously.

"We whose fathers were of the Samurai," Kameda continued, "would keep the old and let it flourish

beside the new—a white chrysanthemum by a red. The younger men of this generation see only the new. They are drunk with novelty. If Japan becomes the country which they would make it, then we shall perish as Europe is perishing."

"It isn't dead yet," Dinosaur objected. "What about us? Are we headed for the graveyard too?"

"How can I tell?"

"You think we are. So your mediaeval *bushido,* with its noble and foolish obedience to an emperor who may be nothing that is noble and everything that is foolish, is to be the last refuge of poor, battered civilization? I'm afraid you're dreaming an outworn dream."

"Perhaps we are," Kameda agreed quietly. "Yet the sons of the Samurai think differently."

"And from your remarks I infer that Mr. Doi disagrees with 'the sons of the Samurai'? Is that the point?"

Kameda nodded. "There are two factions of the Sons. I spoke of the true followers of the old traditions."

"Then," Blye continued, "it follows that your Emperor also prefers limousines and telephones and machine guns to whatever it was that the true, old Samurai used when they charged into battle. I must say my sympathies are with the Emperor."

"Mr. Doi is a modern young man," Kameda agreed. "Our traditions, our greatness, mean nothing to him. To have Japan one of a disorderly crowd in the com-

mon market place of the world is better in his eyes than a contented nation living in a garden."

"Your passion is for azaleas, isn't it? But remember, you are past middle age. Mr. Doi has still most of the follies of youth before him, and so has Japan. You wouldn't want the poor fellow to turn down every pretty girl who says 'hullo' to him for a nice, chaste bunch of white violets, would you? It isn't in human nature. 'Pigs is pigs,' as one of our great poets said. I admit that it's harder to justify the Emperor's indiscretions. But what about me and my reptile eggs?"

"I wish," Kameda confessed after a long silence, "you had not bumped into Okada."

"Why, precisely?"

"Because then you would never have suspected him of concealing important truths from our Emperor."

"Oh, I don't know," Blye demurred. "Give me a little credit for not being so dumb as I look. I should have followed up all the clues in sight."

"There would have been no clues to follow," Kameda corrected quietly. "But for that unfortunate accident in the library the police would never have questioned you about the death of the Emperor's agent."

"You score. My question about the tall Jap to the cop in Harvard Square started everything. It only needed that fool sergeant's second-hand account of what the library girls said about 'the Japanese gentleman' consulting the technical chemical journals once a month to put me on the right trail. No bloodhound was

needed to follow a hot scent like that. And you finished the job, my dear Kameda, by consenting to lunch with me in that smelly Greek restaurant. Now why did you do it, if you're so sorry you did?"

"What could I do? I saw that you were intelligent —in your own way."

"Thanks," said Dinosaur. "How about yourself?"

"If you discovered something to the disadvantage of our Emperor, I was bound for the honor of Japan to buy your silence."

"So you promised me half of whatever we found together, meaning all the time to double cross me, lead me on a wild goose chase, and find exactly nothing?"

Kameda protested vigorously that Blye had entirely misconstrued his motives. Again his evident sincerity convinced Dinosaur that the little consul was at least one half of one per cent truthful in his protestations of good faith.

"No," he concluded, "I promised, if you remember, that you should have your reward."

"From the Emperor, for doing him out of what he wants so badly?"

"From the Sons of the Samurai."

"Oh," Blye remarked. "I begin to see the light. You devoted bushido mediaevalists are going to chasten the too modern young Mr. Doi and his ultra-occidental father for the good of Japan, if not for their own? And you are willing to pay me handsomely for not letting this thing that the modernists desire so ardently fall into their hands?"

Kameda nodded.

"What is it, by the way, that you Sons of the Samurai don't want the modern babies to play with?"

"I do not know."

"Swear to that?"

"On the word of a Samurai."

Blye eyed him doubtfully. There was nothing to be gained by openly doubting him, so he affected belief.

"All right, Kameda, I can't very well disbelieve an oath like that. Now we are getting down to tacks. What makes *you* believe that this unknown thing would be bad for Japan?"

"To me it is not belief. It is certainty. Would Okada, a Samurai of the Samurai, have willingly withheld this thing from our Emperor when he desired it, if it had been for the good of Japan to possess whatever it may be?"

"That is what our criminal lawyers would call a 'hypothetical question.' Let me see if I can disentangle it. Taking the snake by the tail I infer that you mean me to believe that Okada's technical disloyalty to the Emperor is really the finest kind of loyalty. By preventing the Emperor from having what isn't good for the Samurai ideal of Japan, Okada was actually helping the Emperor to be all that he should be, and would like to be in his better moments?"

Kameda gravely nodded.

"Then that's the essence of bushido, the concentrated extract of the real stuff, as it were. Your mediaeval belief holds that all mere mortals must give up everything, including life, to say nothing of com-

mon horse-sense, to a divine being called the Mikado."

"You do not say it justly. We are all sons of Japan. The Samurai died for Japan; their chief was but the visible spirit of our country."

"*Banzai!* You beat me at metaphysics, but not at believing fish stories. So you are willing to believe that Okada lived like a pig at Shortridge's for three years, and worked like a slave, just to keep the Emperor good in spite of himself. It doesn't sound particularly convincing."

"You will find it to be the truth if Okada is still living."

"If I do, then I'll let you have my share of our imaginary loot."

"We shall not ask you for it," Kameda retorted scornfully. "It is not what the Samurai fought for."

He put on his coat and hat.

"When do you start on the expedition for the Museum?"

"They can't say definitely. I'm all ready. There is a chance that they may get hold of the money earlier than they hoped. Have you decided to come along as interpreter?"

"I must. Okada may need my help."

"You Samurai stick together, evidently."

"We are sons of one father."

"Well, now what about young Doi? Is he going to draw irises for that Shortridge?"

"He has said nothing as yet."

"What is he doing now?"

"I don't know."

"No? Where did you leave him?"

Kameda told. Blye would have found out for himself sooner or later, so the consul was betraying no secrets.

"My guess is," Blye remarked when Kameda's burst of confidence ceased, "that Doi will apply for a job at Shortridge's factory as soon as he gets back from Washington. Rather, he will ask you to get him the job."

Kameda thought it better not to deny this theory. In fact the last thing Mr. Doi said before his train pulled out for Washington was a sharp order to Kameda to prepare the way for him as a designer at Shortridge's. The consul planned to call immediately after leaving Blye. Should Blye or one of his agents —Kameda shrewdly suspected Dinosaur of having more than one pair of eyes—follow him out to Somerville, any attempt at truth-stretching might be hard to sophisticate. So he wisely said nothing, hoping that Blye would draw an incorrect conclusion from his indifferent silence.

Blye did nothing of the kind. The moment his dignified guest had departed he called up his most trustworthy scout and ordered him to proceed at once to Somerville to keep watch on the Shortridge house. He was to report if any Jap entered or left the house before midnight.

Shortly before ten that evening the scout reported by telephone that Mr. Kameda had just left the Shortridges.

"He made rather a long stay," Blye muttered as he

resumed his study of *De re metallica*. "Either he has fallen in love with Shortridge, or it required a lot of persuasion to make that hardheaded business man take on a green Japanese apprentice who knows nothing about art and less about designing jewelry."

Mr. Doi's business in Washington occupied him only a few hours. The Japanese ambassador met him at the station in response to a telegram from Kameda, and asked what he could do for his distinguished guest. Doi explained volubly in Japanese, and the pair proceeded to call on the Secretary of State. That gentleman knew all about Mr. Doi, as it was through his office that negotiations for waiving of passports and other little international courtesies had been conducted. Although the Secretary was fully aware of Doi's identity, he rigidly observed the cabled request of the Japanese government and addressed his distinguished young visitor simply as Mr. Doi. What did Mr. Doi desire to make his stay in the United States pleasanter?

Through the ambassador, Doi, whose English halted like a hamstrung horse, courteously asked if the Secretary could arrange to let him 'borrow' three or four of the shrewdest secret service men in the employ of the United States Government. Their services would be required for only a few days. Mr. Kameda, the Japanese Consul at Boston, would explain to the detectives what was required.

The Secretary replied at once that he would be happy to make the necessary arrangements. He pushed a button to summon his clerk.

"The men are to report directly to Mr. Kameda?" he asked through the ambassador.

Doi replied that that was correct, and the Secretary made a brief annotation on a slip of paper, which he then carefully sealed in an envelope. Having addressed the envelope he handed it to the clerk with instructions that it be delivered at once.

"Four of my best men," he informed Doi through their high class interpreter, "will report to Mr. Kameda before you return to Boston. Is there anything else I can do for you?"

Doi thanked him in broken English, rose, and bowed himself out with the Ambassador, leaving the Secretary wondering. The Secretary had been told just enough of this Japanese affair by the President to make him prompt in executing orders. According to the President, the Emperor of Japan had asked almost as a personal favor that the United States Government accord every assistance possible to the Japanese 'investigators,' Messrs. Doi and Tanabe, in their efforts to trace the past life in America of Satoru Okada. The Emperor stated that he of course would in no way interfere with the ends of American justice. If Okada were indeed guilty of murder as suspected by the Boston police, the Japanese government would be only too glad to deliver him up to punishment 'if and when captured.' In the meantime, for reasons private in nature and important only to the Japanese government, the Emperor was extremely anxious to trace Okada's movements in the United States. A request like this was not to be denied. The President saw to

it personally that the Japanese received every consideration they could possibly expect.

The Secretary of State was by birth a Missourian, and he was proud of the fact. His hard sense in the Cabinet was fast becoming a proverb. Like the original man from Missouri, he had to be 'shown.'

"They've got to show me," he muttered as he pushed the button for his clerk, " 'I'm from Missouri.' All this kowtowing to a twenty year old kid who can't speak decent English may be 'international courtesy,' but it's pretty poor business. I'm going to find out what those Japs are up to. What did Okada know to make him so valuable? If it is worth money to Japan it is worth more to us to find out why it is worth their money."

The clerk appeared and asked if he had been called.

"Yes. Find out when I can get a train for Boston."

Presently the clerk returned and said there was a fast train in half an hour.

"Call a taxi." The Secretary flung on his coat and hat. "If anyone asks where I've gone, say to New York to see the dog show."

Arriving in Boston the Secretary chose a rather shabby hotel off Copley Plaza and went to bed. He had not yet decided how to open his campaign.

In the morning his simple plan had matured. He went to the best detective agency in the city and engaged spotters to follow any Americans seen leaving Kameda's apartment. The Secretary's theory was that it would be useless questioning any Japanese. He might as well ask a papier maché Buddha whether U. S.

steel was due for a drop. If any Americans were in contact with Kameda, his men could work on them to find out whether they knew anything of what the Japanese were doing. If not, he would have the U. S. secret service men shadowed to find out what they were learning for Mr. Doi. He smiled as he thought of the last possibility. As a matter of fact he planned to use a more direct method.

The first three days of the 'spotting' netted nothing. Several Americans called on Kameda, but on investigation these all turned out to be ex-tourists renewing Japanese associations with their old friend the consul. The fourth evening landed a real catch. Blye had stood his estrangement from Kameda as long as seemed profitable. He yearned to have a personal look at those rolls again. On arriving at Kameda's he was politely informed by the janitor that Mr. Kameda was not at home.

"He told you to tell me that?" Blye asked, toying with a two dollar bill. He and the janitor were old acquaintances. The janitor nodded his head and said No. He got the bill.

"Hospitable cuss," said Blye, turning on his heel. "Those two Japs still hanging about here?" he flung over his shoulder.

The janitor nodded, and Dinosaur proceeded on his lonely way home. Although his visit had proved fruitless he had checked up on the work of his scouts. They also reported that the two Japs were still hanging about Kameda's.

The spotter followed Blye home. He waited until

the young man had entered the house and probably settled down in his room. A sign in the window told him that this was a shabby genteel rooming house. He rang the bell for the landlady.

"Good evening," he said, politely bowing as if he were a typical Harvard gentleman, which he was not. "I just saw an old friend of mine ahead of me down the street, and I believe he turned in here. Is this where Mr. Brownlee lives?"

The landlady sadly admitted that it was not. After the manner of her kind she confessed that young Mr. Blye was her only roomer at present.

"Sorry I troubled you," the polite spotter apologized. "Good evening."

On hearing his man's report over the telephone, the Secretary said he would be right out. He arrived at Blye's lodging within the hour, and was at once admitted, as he assured the landlady that Mr. Blye was expecting him.

CHAPTER VII

A STRANGE TASK

THE Secretary of State was an observant man. In the ten seconds that elapsed between Blye's invitation to take a seat, and his walk to the indicated chair, the Secretary noted that this alert looking young man had a large library of books on geology and travel in the orient, also an obvious array of maps, many of them printed in Japanese characters. He decided that he had made no mistake in following up the spotter's clue.

"Mr. Kameda referred me to you," he began untruthfully in answer to Blye's look of interrogation. "My name is Smith." Of course it was not, but the Secretary thought Smith would do as well as any other name until he saw how the land lay.

"Pleased to meet you, Mr. Smith," Dinosaur replied with equal untruth. "If you are selling books, or life insurance, or Florida real estate, I am not interested."

"I am selling nothing," the Secretary confessed. "In fact I am what might be called an amateur."

"What kind of an amateur?" Blye demanded suspiciously.

"Oh, just an idler. To come to the point, I am in-

terested in this Okada story the Boston papers printed some weeks ago. Mr. Kameda said you could tell me all about it. I didn't follow very closely at the time, so naturally I lost some of the details."

"Mr. Kameda?" Dinosaur repeated with a blank expression. "Who is he?"

"The Japanese consul, of course."

"Haven't you made a mistake? I am not very well acquainted with Mr. Kameda," Blye explained with just enough truth to be on the safe side of the fence whichever way his visitor should jump.

"Mr. Kameda told me you would know all about the Okada affair," the Secretary persisted.

"Of course I knew all that was in the papers," Blye acknowledged, "and I'll be glad to tell you what I remember, if that will be of any use to you."

The Secretary assured him that it would. Among his other pursuits as an amateur he dabbled in short story writing—according to his own account. The 'Okada mystery' appealed to him as the germ of an excellent plot. Blye talked well for half an hour, omitting none of the essential features of the case as reported in the press, and carefully abstaining from mentioning any fact of deeper significance. The Secretary thanked him, and diplomatically forced him to accept a good cigar. The wary Dinosaur at first refused, foreseeing that he could not very well throw the pest out while smoking one of his fifty cent perfectos. On second thought however he accepted the offering to allay his guest's suspicions. For he was a little more than doubtful about Mr. Smith's identity.

Was the man a detective? And if so, who were his employers? He was no police-station hanger-on. Blye felt certain of this fact at least.

After their cigars were well started, Mr. Smith made a few comments on the story he had just heard from Blye.

"The police," he concluded, "have acted with phenomenal stupidity in this whole matter. They should have given out the story of the row in the library the night of the murder—if it was a murder—before Okada had time to get away. What sense was there in publishing all that gossip about Okada's reading of chemical journals? If they had known what they were doing, the police would have forbidden those girls at the library to open their mouths in public."

"Why?" Dinosaur demanded, interested in spite of his wariness.

"Because, Mr. Blye, even an amateur like me can see that there is something big—tremendously big—behind all this. They should have hushed up the whole affair after it was too late to hope to catch Okada. He was probably in Asia when the story came out."

"You work too fast for me," Blye admitted.

"Remember," Smith continued, "I am a writer of short stories. I must work fast, or my plot dies on me. Now, what the police should have done, is this. They should have communicated at once with the Secretary of State. By keeping things dark we might have had a chance of catching Okada, or scotching his deviltry, whatever it may be. But now, with all this publicity, the Japanese will know that we must suspect

something. They will act accordingly. Our chances of finding out what is at the bottom of all this are practically nil. What if Okada knows the secret of some new war gas that would wipe us out wholesale? Or a radical improvement in airplanes—a more practical fuel than gasoline, for instance. You see what I mean. The man evidently was a chemist. Of course the Japanese government would like to get hold of him before we have to hang him for murder."

Dinosaur gazed at his visitor with professed admiration.

"You have the makings of a peach of a short story," he commented drily. "Send me a copy when it comes out."

"I shall be delighted to do so," Mr. Smith retorted grimly. "You have travelled in the orient?" he asked, with a glance at the maps.

"Yes, with the geological expeditions." Blye felt that he might as well tell the man anything he could find out from *Who's Who* or the police.

Smith considered in silence for some moments before venturing his next question.

"Planning to go back to the orient?"

"In a few weeks. The Geological Museum here wants me to collect dinosaur and other fossilized eggs for them."

Mr. Smith fished in his vest pocket. With dramatic effect he produced his card, giving his correct name and title, and presented it to Blye.

"There," he said, "my cards are all on the table. What about yours?"

"Is this part of the story?" Blye asked quizzically.

"It is. I came up here yesterday from Washington on purpose to see you—although I didn't know you existed until about two hours ago, when one of my spotters reported that you had just left Kameda's apartment. Now, young man, are you a decent American citizen? I don't mean a hundred-percenter, or anything of that sort. You would not sell out your country for money?"

"Not to a Jap, anyway," Blye assured him. "I'm no spread-eagle patriot, but I was one of the first of our fellows to get to France. Although," he laughed, "I kicked myself for a fool after I got there for not having waited my regular turn. I guess that places me."

"I'll take it for granted. I shall also assume that you will not tell anybody, even your girl if you have one, anything about this visit or a word of what I am going to say next."

He proceeded to give a minute account of all that he knew concerning the entry of 'Mr. Doi' and Mr. Tanabe without passports into the United States, and every detail of what had transpired at the Capital on the recent visit of Doi with the Japanese Ambassador. He even included an accurate description of the four secret service men whom he had placed at the disposal of Mr. Doi.

"You should be able to recognize them if you meet," he concluded with a laugh. "Now, there are all my cards. Once more, what about yours? What do you know of Kameda?"

Blye studied his man long and doubtfully.

"Can you identify yourself?" he asked at length. "Anyone could get cards like this engraved," he held up the Secretary's, "for about five dollars."

The Secretary gazed at him in open admiration.

"Bless that spotter! You are just the man we want. The ordinary young fool would have swallowed my yarn whole after seeing that card. Of course I can identify myself."

He produced a handful of convincing letters. Still Dinosaur shook his head.

"They might be forgeries."

"Better and better. Still, I *can* satisfy you. Do you know the President of Harvard?"

"He is not on my calling list," Blye confessed nonchalantly. "When I donate half a ton of stone eggs to the Peabody Museum I shall expect an invitation to tea."

"Still, you know where he lives? You would recognize him if you saw him in his own house?"

"Who wouldn't?"

"Very well, come on and get it over."

Although it was rather late for an evening call the Secretary's card admitted them. The proceedings were brief in the extreme. The Secretary refused to stay and chat, explaining that he wished merely to be identified, as this over-suspicious young man "from the bank" had refused to oblige him after business hours without an absolute identification. It is not known what the President thought of this fish story. He may have conjectured that his esteemed friend had joined a

bridge party of lucky young sharks who doubted the value of his I. O. U. Dinosaur and now the genuine Secretary proceeded to the latter's hotel, where, behind a locked door, they had it out till four in the morning.

Dinosaur told all he knew or suspected. He agreed with the Secretary that something of tremendous international importance probably lay at the bottom of all this mysterious secrecy. They also checked on the probable identity of 'Mr. Doi.' Due to his political bent the Secretary persisted in seeing a new war device of unheard-of devilishness in Okada's passion for chemistry. Blye admitted the possibility, but refused to commit himself absolutely.

"Why bother about what the thing actually is?" he said. "We know it must be big. Let it go at that. When we find it will be time enough to pick it to pieces."

"Couldn't we get a clue," the Secretary suggested, "by finding out what scientific periodical it was that Okada asked for before the fight in the library?"

"I tried that weeks ago. It cost me thirty-five dollars, all told. That flapper who got Okada the journal couldn't for the life of her recall its exact title. She only knew that it was in German, and about chemistry. They take over twenty such at the library. I guess Okada's handsome face made her head swim. She's not the only one," he laughed. "Miss Shortridge's is still going round like a windmill."

"Can't we try her?" the Secretary suggested.

"We could, I suppose. But it would be no use. If she knows anything she won't tell. From the way she

acted the other day I am beginning to believe she doesn't know everything about Okada."

"It seems incredible," the Secretary agreed, "that a clever man like Okada—he seems to be clever—would give himself away to a nineteen-year-old girl. I shouldn't be surprised to learn when we catch him that he has merely been using Miss Shortridge as a cats-paw. The high class Japanese seldom falls in love with a white woman who is not likely to be useful to him."

"What could he use her for?"

"That I don't know. Still, it is a working hypothesis. Can you follow it up?"

Blye shook his head.

"Somehow it doesn't appeal to me."

"I understand how you feel. We can leave that aside. Of course our secret service men will tell us what they find out for Doi."

"Won't that be a breach of international etiquette?"

The Secretary hooted with mirth.

"Etiquette? Why, it's expected of us. All diplomacy, friendly or otherwise, is based on mutual distrust. The Japanese know we shall find out all we can. Only they believe we are too dumb to discover anything of importance."

"In that case," Dinosaur remarked drily, "I'll lay my money on the orientals. I know them."

"So do I. No bets taken. Now what about this egg hunt of yours? Can't you beg off?"

"Why should I? All clues lead to Korea, or I'm a cuckoo. If the Museum wants to pay my expenses why should I kick?"

"We might pay you better."

"Say 'also,' not 'better,' " Blye suggested. "Then I can smash Okada and the reptiles at one swipe. Suppose we split it this way. You—or whoever is behind you at Washington—put up enough extra money for me to make fast travelling possible where it is necessary. If I find anything of value to the government, they pay me what they think is fair. If what I find is of no use to them, I keep it."

"What about Kameda? You have agreed to share with him."

"Only so long as his 'Sons of the Samurai' reward me properly. According to his story the Samurai don't want their Emperor to get hold of whatever it is that Okada is hiding. So they shouldn't complain if I hand it over to you. I guess our navy will be able to keep it away from the Emperor. Then everybody will be satisfied, including the Sons of the Samurai."

"That's settled then. From the day you start on your expedition you are in the pay of the government —unofficially of course. It occurs to me," he continued after a pause, "that those rolls of Okada's could be of use to us. Professor Turner at Columbia University always does our translating for the secret service. I believe he is quite an oriental scholar."

"If he can't read the stuff himself," Blye agreed, "he probably knows some other professor who can."

"How are we to get hold of the rolls?"

"It's easy. Kameda had no legal right to them, had he?"

"I can't say," the Secretary confessed.

"Anyway he was not sure that he had. Let us bluff him out of them." He reached for the telephone. "I'm going to leave a call for the Chief of Police."

"Can we trust him?" The Secretary doubted the Chief's discretion after the lamentable exhibition of his subordinates in mishandling the Okada case.

"He's no traffic cop," Blye assured him.

He left a message that the Chief would greatly oblige a gentleman from Washington if he called a certain number the first thing in the morning.

"We have about three hours to sleep all this off," Blye remarked, putting on his hat. "I shall get a bed here."

Shortly after eight o'clock the Secretary was routed out of bed by a call from the Chief. A few words over the wire brought a promise that the Chief would be "right up"—in about twenty minutes. When he arrived he found the Secretary shaving. The situation was briefly explained so far as was necessary. All the Chief learned was that the Japanese consul had exceeded his authority in 'taking charge of' Okada's property. The department at Washington wished to examine the misappropriated property in the hope of tracing the supposed murderer. They were anxious to learn if possible how Okada had managed to evade the immigration laws both in entering and in leaving the country, as there was no official record of him. To the honest Chief all this seemed clear enough. He was hazy on the law, however. Did Kameda have the rights he claimed over the property, or did he not?

The Secretary had denied Kameda's right; the Chief did not feel so sure.

"Of course he was within his rights," the Secretary asserted. "What we want you to do is to bluff him into thinking he wasn't. After we have examined the property we shall find out that you were wrong, and apologize to Kameda and the Japanese government. We shall regret exceedingly that your ignorance of the law led you into a grave discourtesy to the representative of a friendly nation. I thought you got the point when I explained it the first time."

The Secretary had not misjudged his man. He actually knew no more about the legality of Kameda's doings than did the Chief. Grinning broadly the honest fellow took his leave, promising to deliver the precious rolls within an hour.

Blye and the Secretary were just finishing their breakfast in the hotel dining room when a page entered bawling the Secretary's name, "Telephone for Mr. ——."

The message from the devoted Chief was somewhat disconcerting. He found Kameda at home, breakfasting. The consul would gladly have given up the rolls if it had still been in his power to do so. Kameda greatly regretted his error in legal tact, the more so as he had destroyed the rolls the previous evening, after deciding that they were worthless and not likely ever to be claimed. They were only taking up room and accumulating dust, moths, and other pests. So he had burned them up—like logs, to take the chill off

his bedroom. In proof of his assertion he showed the Chief a grate filled with a mass of white ashes, evidently of a fine paper, some of it still retaining the shape of the original rolls, and much of it faintly showing the charred ink marks of oriental writing, with here and there the faint outline of a drawing.

"He says he will be glad to let me take care of what is left of Okada's clothing. Mr. Blye, he claims, cut it all up," the Chief continued. "I haven't seen it myself."

The Secretary made a quick decision. As Kameda, Doi and Company had not destroyed the remains of Okada's rich Japanese clothing the stuff could be of no value whatever as police material.

"Tell Kameda," he snapped, "to wrap himself up well in all those rags and go to hell."

"Aye, aye sir," came the Chief's voice.

Blye tried to console his friend with the assurance that he still remembered the essential features of many of the drawings.

"With that and *De re metallica* to go on, I can get along without the hieroglyphics."

"What has *De re* to do with it?"

"I'll tell you when I've worked it out. The whole thing is still up in the air."

"Like us. Well, I suppose there is nothing to be done except to wait till the secret service men report. I shall run up here to see you again after I hear from them. According to what Doi said they should finish inside of a week. What are you going to do?"

"Hang around Somerville — particularly Shortridge's factory. I have a feeling that young Doi will go to work as an apprentice artist the moment he returns from Washington. He should be on his way to work now."

Blye was not mistaken. The fatigue of travel seemed to have made no impression on the sturdy Japanese stamina of Mr. Doi and the venerable Tanabe. On reaching his lodging, Blye found one of his scouts bursting with eagerness to report. This time he felt sure that he had a full two dollars' worth. He had indeed, for he reported that Kameda, Doi, and Tanabe had left the consul's place at half-past six that very morning to take the subway to Cambridge, and later the surface car to Somerville. The scout had followed the trio to the Shortridge house, where Kameda left his companions to return to his apartment. He must have arrived home just in time for breakfast and the Chief of the Police. The three Japanese probably spent the greater part of the night in destroying the Korean rolls. Having handed over the two dollar bill, Blye started for Somerville.

Reaching the Shortridge factory he walked boldly in and looked around the main workroom. Shortridge was conducting Tanabe and Doi through the place, evidently trying to familiarize the young "artist" with the scene of his labors. Blye withdrew, closing the door noiselessly. He had seen all that was necessary.

As he crossed the street a well dressed, middle-aged man stopped him.

"Can you tell me if that is the Shortridge factory?"

Blye indicated the prominent sign above the doorway.

"It seems to be," he said, "unless that sign lies. And you, I guess, are one of the United States secret service men sent down here to help the two Japs inside there now. Where are the other three of you?"

The man stared as if he had been shot.

"Who the devil are you?"

"Not the person you thought I was, any way. I don't work for Shortridge. Good bye!"

Leaving the agent speechless with rage Dinosaur proceeded on his way to the Shortridge house. The encounter with the man had given a sudden impulse to his plans. Evidently Doi had already set his borrowed spies onto the Shortridges. That implied a questioning, more or less underhanded, of Geraldine. To Blye this using of a harassed girl like a pawn in a crooked game of chess was not exactly good sport. If Geraldine were a mature woman with a shady past and quite well able to take care of herself before police officers—these secret service men were nothing less—it would all be fair enough. But the vision which he still vividly retained of her turning the corner of her street with her handkerchief to her left cheek, the picture of woebegone misery, was too much for his nerves. Doi was against her, the secret service was against her, and Okada, after getting her into this rare mess, had left her to face the music alone. Let her have her Jap, if she still imagined she was in love with him; it was no affair of Dinosaur's. But so long

as he was on the side of the whites, he would fight like a white man and leave the children alone. He rang the bell and waited three minutes for the maid to open the door.

The maid had forgotten her everlasting tray. Callers are not expected at ten in the morning in civilized countries.

"What name please?"

"Mr. Blye."

When the maid returned, she informed him that Miss Shortridge was not at home.

"I'll wait till she is. Tell her again."

At this juncture Mrs. Shortridge rushed into the fray. Blye noted that she had once been as beautiful as Geraldine. A life with Shortridge however had left its traces in the marks of a ruined disposition.

"What do you want?" she demanded.

"Merely to speak privately to your daughter for about half a minute."

"I shall not allow it!" Mrs. Shortridge exclaimed with an only-over-my-dead-body air of desperate finality. Her voice had risen so that Geraldine, listening upstairs, heard every word.

When Mrs. Shortridge said she forbade this, that, or the other, Geraldine invariably thirsted for the forbidden fruit. The memory of her week in hades after Okada's disappearance had left her bold and bitter against her well-meaning, puritanical parents. Without further ado she descended the stairs, gave her mother a defiant glance, and walked straight up to Blye.

"Come in here," she said, leading the way to Okada's study.

"Now what is it?" she demanded when she stood facing him with her back to the closed door.

"Just this. Mr. Doi is going to work for your father?"

She nodded.

"If you still have any regard for Mr. Okada, look out for Doi. If I told you who he is you would see the point."

"Who is he?"

"You must find out for yourself. The second thing is this. One or more men—white—will question you about Mr. Okada's private life. Answer none of their questions."

"They will ask father," she said with fierce bitterness.

"Yes, they don't play the game straight," Blye agreed. "That isn't what they're paid to do. Well, that is all I had to say. Unless," he hesitated, "you care to answer a question for me?"

She studied his face as one might scrutinize that of a hostile animal.

"What is the question?"

"Pardon me for asking it. But things are coming to some dangerous crisis for you, just at this time, as well as for several others, myself included. Do you still care for Okada as you did before he left you to face all this alone?"

He knew that he had blundered, but he did it deliberately.

"Okada did not do as you insinuate!" she flashed. "He is a gentleman."

"And a Samurai," Blye added.

"I know that," she remarked contemptuously.

"But as you have never lived in Japan as I have, you don't know what it means. To be a Samurai is to put everything you have, even your own life, in the second place. Japan and the Emperor come first. So don't be astonished if you find out sooner or later that Okada did not mean everything he told you."

The shot had found its mark. For one ghastly moment she doubted. Involuntarily her hand stole to her left cheek, and again her face became utterly wretched. Blye noted the unconscious gesture and speculated on its significance.

"That's all," he said. "I shall not bother you any more. Remember, don't answer any questions."

In the hallway he naturally met Mrs. Shortridge. She evidently had been trying to overhear the conversation in Okada's study. As the door was a thick one, and they had lowered their voices, she probably had not succeeded.

"I guess I'm pretty low," he muttered, "taking advantage of a browbeaten girl like that. Still, it is for her own good. Ugh! That's what a preacher would say before consigning you to hell."

The United States secret service men believed in direct action. The problem which Mr. Doi had set them was twofold. In the first place they were to find out all they could about Okada's private life while he was a member of the Shortridge household. From

Kameda young Mr. Doi had learned of Geraldine's attachment. Doi saw in Miss Shortridge a probably inexhaustible source of information. His hopes however were far too optimistic; he did not know Geraldine's will power nor her loyalty, nor had he correctly estimated the clamlike astuteness of his handsome fellow countryman, Saturo Okada. Through Kameda's fluent English Doi had outlined all this, except of course the truth about the characters of Okada and Geraldine, to the secret service men. Neither he nor they anticipated the least difficulty in making Geraldine talk.

Their second problem seemed a little harder. At first the detectives thought Kameda must have misunderstood what Doi wanted them to do. But no, this extraordinary task was precisely what he expected of them. They were to ascertain, if possible, what had become of Satoru Okada's gold tooth.

In making the request, Doi realized that he might be setting an impossible task. If Okada never possessed a gold tooth, the secret service naturally would fail to find 'Saturo Okada's gold tooth.' Doi was uncertain in his own mind whether Okada had owned such an article. He did not confess this to the detectives. They were instructed to search for something which might possibly exist as if it actually were a tangible, existing, hard fact. Doi hoped that if Okada never had a gold tooth, the detectives would incidentally succeed in proving its non-existence. The secret service men asked in vain for further details. Doi refused to give any.

The reason for his refusal was very simple. He had no further details that would appeal to hardheaded practical men like these wily officers of justice. His strange request was based on a stranger theory. This theory evolved as the inevitable sequel to old Tanabe's scholarly rendering of the ancient Korean rolls, and was indeed the ultimate reason for burning those unique works of art. If Doi had been closely questioned as to his theory he could have told little. The essence of those mysterious rolls seemed to be concentrated in 'a gold tooth.' Now Okada evidently had been an assiduous student of the rolls. As such he must have learned the unique importance of possessing a gold tooth. Doi himself did not fully appreciate the importance of owning a gold tooth. From Tanabe's erudite translation he only inferred that the discovery of Okada's gold tooth—provided he ever possessed one—was the necessary first link in a chain which would lead ultimately to what the Emperor desired for the supremacy of Japan. Therefore he must leave no stone unturned to unearth the precious tooth, if it existed, or, if Okada never had owned such a thing, to prove that fact to the hilt.

The detectives set about their job as if they liked it. One member of their sagacious quartette was detailed to spy out the land around the Shortridge factory and to question any likely-looking employees. Dinosaur disposed of this one. The other three loitered about till one of them reported that Mrs. Shortridge had just left the house with her shopping basket, presumably to stock up the day's supplies. They made a

bee line for the house. It was agreed that third degree methods would succeed best with an overwrought young girl.

The spokesman stuck his foot in the door when the maid answered the bell.

"We want to see Miss Shortridge."

"She is not in."

"Yes she is. See this?"

The man flung back the lapel of his coat, revealing the silver disc which proclaimed him for what he was.

"Tell her to come down before we go up and get her."

Geraldine joined them, cool and collected.

"What do you want?"

"You knew Satoru Okada?"

"I will answer none of your questions."

"Then we must take you to the police station and lock you up till you find your tongue."

"Very well. Shall I get my hat?"

"Talk it out sensibly here," a second bully suggested, seeing that the bluff had failed.

"I will not talk."

The man ostentatiously thrust himself into the dining-room and sat down at the table. His companions followed suit.

"We shall wait till your mother gets back from her shopping."

Geraldine realized that she was lost. She went white and fled to her own room.

In about half an hour Mrs. Shortridge returned. Geraldine met her at the door.

"Don't answer any of their questions!" she implored.

"Whose questions?" her mother asked, brushing her aside. Then she saw her three visitors. As one man they showed their badges. Mrs Shortridge dropped her basket and all but collapsed. One of the men assisted her to a chair. He saw that they had an easy job ahead of them. The leader went directly to the point.

"Who is your dentist, Mrs. Shortridge?"

By finding the Shortridge dentist they would probably locate Okada's, as the Japanese had been a member of the household for nearly three years. Geraldine kept her head. She did not ask her mother not to answer. To have done so would have shown that she considered the question important. From her calm expression the detectives could not judge whether their shot was in the right direction or just at random. Perhaps the question was in fact quite unimportant.

Mrs. Shortridge stammered out the desired information.

"Did Mr. Okada have good health?" was the next question.

"He always seemed to have."

"How about his teeth?"

"I don't know. They looked good."

"You never noticed whether he had a gold tooth?"

"No."

"How about you, Miss Shortridge?"

"I will answer no questions."

They could not tell from her level voice what was at the back of her mind.

"Now look here, Miss Shortridge," the man con-

tinued, "we heard from good authority about your liking for Mr. Okada. You wouldn't want to get him into trouble, would you?" He paused interrogatively for a reply. Receiving none he assumed that Geraldine's silence was consent. "To cut a long story short, the Government wants to find out how Japanese slip into this country and out without passports. That's why we're here now. If we could lay our hands for sure on Okada—he's wanted for murder, you know, we might be able to clear up the whole business. Our men out in Japan have caught a suspect. They think this man is your friend Okada."

He watched her narrowly, but she gave no sign of her emotions.

"The identification of this suspect all turns on a matter of dentistry. Of course the man swears he is not Okada—he would swear to that any way. We can settle the whole thing out of hand. Did Okada have a gold tooth?"

Geraldine maintained an obstinate silence. The man could not guess whether she knew everything or nothing about Okada's hypothetical gold tooth. If she knew either that he had one, or definitely that he had not, she succeeded perfectly in concealing her knowledge.

"You and he were close friends," the detective continued. "So you must know one way or the other. Why don't you tell us what you know? We may have to hang an innocent man just because you refuse to answer a simple question. You won't do it? All right, then. Come on," he motioned to the others. "We shall

have to cable the authorities in Tokyo that they've got the right man."

His parting shot had not the slightest effect on Geraldine, at least outwardly.

Walking down the street the trio held a council of war. They agreed that Geraldine was rather a hard nut to crack. Being used to strong arm methods with their suspects they were not sportsmen enough to admire her grit. Her cool courage merely irritated them.

"I wish I had her alone for five minutes," one of them remarked savagely. "She'd talk. Well, I suppose the next is to see what we can get out of the Shortridges' dentist."

Here they met another exasperating check. The dentist had left town for a week to attend the annual convention of his profession in St. Louis—a long way from Cambridge. If the gentlemen desired any work done, Dr. So-and-so, four blocks farther down the street, would be glad to take care of them. They left, swearing.

CHAPTER VIII

CALLED

Two days of Shortridge's fussiness were enough for Mr. Doi. He politely abandoned his apprenticeship as a designer of baubles, and returned to his hotel in Boston, where he and the amiable old Tanabe whiled away the time discussing the outlandishness of American customs. Periodically the docile old scholar was ordered out of the sitting room while Doi received the reports of the secret service men. Young Doi would have preferred to hear these privately, but his imperfect knowledge of English forced him to rely on Kameda as interpreter.

Kameda so far had been discreetly loyal. He had not even hinted to Dinosaur that Doi was interested in Okada's gold tooth—if such a thing existed.

It was not necessary for him, however, to betray his overlord. The secret service men saved him the trouble. While killing time till the absent dentist should return, the detectives received a flying visit from the Secretary of State. In half an hour the Secretary knew as much about the actual state of the investigation as Doi. He was extremely puzzled. What could be the significance, if any, of Okada's gold tooth beyond a possible mark of identification? Leaving the detectives

to their pursuit of trivial details in the past life of Satoru Okada as a jeweler's designer in Somerville, the Secretary went in search of Blye.

On the fateful morning of the Secretary's visit to Somerville, Geraldine escaped early from the house. To stay longer in the pest-ridden Puritanism of her 'home' on that particular morning was a trial beyond the limits of her young endurance. So she went shopping, with forty-five cents in her purse.

Her first purchase was a ten-cent bar of nut chocolate to sustain her soul in its sorrows. This she bought on the avenue, at a little fruit shop about half a mile from her house. The avenue at that particular hour was all but deserted. It was too late for the office workers to be on their way, and too early for housewives to be doing their morning shopping. There were not ten people in sight.

Presently she heard running steps behind her. She glanced back, to see which way she should move to let the man in a hurry pass. Her heart gave a great leap; the man was a Japanese. Before he caught up she guessed that he was following her. She was right; the man had waited nearly a week for this opportunity. This was the first time she had left the house alone when the streets were not crowded with pedestrians.

Before she had time to scrutinize his face—he was a short man—he had thrust a package into her hand. She recovered from her astonishment in time to see the messenger speeding down a crooked side street. Two seconds later she had lost sight of him. The man was gone.

Geraldine's second purchase was in a tea room. She ordered a pot of tea to steady her nerves while she opened the package. The waitress asked if she would have toast with her tea, and Geraldine assented in a daze. Then she opened the package.

She did not act hastily. One can do a lot of hard thinking in an hour and a half. When she rose at last to pay her bill she had definitely turned the corner. Nineteen years slipped forever into the irrevocable past of a life that was to be hers no longer. It was not Geraldine Shortridge who glanced at the check to see how much she owed, but a woman who had turned the corner.

With a momentary shock of dismay she saw that she owed exactly thirty-five cents. Tea rooms are not as a rule economical places in which to breakfast, and this one was no exception. The change would exhaust the capital in her purse, and she urgently needed ten cents more. With a new decisiveness, unlike the timidity of the old Geraldine, she walked into the telephone booth. The call would cost ten cents, leaving her just that amount short when she came to pay her bill.

She called Mrs. Shortridge. When the maid at the other end of the wire answered, Geraldine asked for 'Mrs. Shortridge.' Already she had ceased thinking of her mother as such. The hour and a half had taught her that mere consanguinity is no evidence of any stronger bond.

"This is Geraldine," she said, grimly conscious of the ironic falsehood. "I have just met Marjorie

Meacham. Her mother is away for the week in New York. Can I go out to their place in Lynn till next Sunday?"

At first Mrs. Shortridge was obdurate. Geraldine let her talk herself out.

"Things haven't been very pleasant at home lately," she said. "I know it is my fault, and I'm sorry. Wouldn't it be better if I stayed with Marjorie for a few days till our nerves are less ragged? I promise to look at things more sanely when I come back. We all need a rest."

Mrs. Shortridge gave a grudging consent.

"Goodbye, mother."

Geraldine hung up the receiver and left the booth to confront the cashier. After a pretended search in her purse she confessed that she had only twenty-five cents with her. The cashier looked stony.

"I'll leave you this ring," Geraldine volunteered, slipping it off her finger, "till I can go home and get the extra ten cents."

The ring was a present from her father on her seventeenth birthday. They were on good terms then. It was quite a nice ring, although not designed by Okada, of platinum filigree mounting an oriental sapphire.

The cashier seemed conscience-stricken on this unexpected show of good faith, and tried to refuse the pledge, but Geraldine insisted. She had a reason. Promising to return to settle the bill and reclaim her valuable ring, she hurried out to the street.

That afternoon the Secretary found Dinosaur immersed in the geology of Northern Korea. To-day the barrier of the 'mountains ever white' to the north against Manchuria fascinated him. Several browned old books of travel by early eighteenth century Franciscans and Jesuits, who first penetrated Korea when Christianity began to filter in from Canton, lay open on the work table. These were all written in a dog Latin as easy to read as French or Italian. The allusions however to the 'Land of the Morning Calm' were disappointingly few, and most were second or third hand, not the earliest oriental missionaries' own accounts, but repetitions of gossip picked up here and there in China.

When those old accounts were written Cho-sen was indeed a forbidden land, and the authors, especially the earliest Jesuits in China, relied almost entirely for their knowledge of Korea on the none too guileless tales of the Chinese. From what he read in the eighteenth century narratives, Blye doubted whether any of the Jesuits or Franciscans had actually succeeded in reaching Seoul, the capital, as they seemed to imply. Their accounts all had a suspicious 'traditional' ring, as if they were retailing the exaggerated marvels of men who had seen the wonders, but who were more anxious to gull a foreigner than to tell the plain truth. The older the narrative the more garbled its story, until the earliest of all, written in the seventeenth century by the Jesuits who taught the Chinese how to make decent astronomical instruments, were pro-

fessedly set forth as mere tales of imaginative Chinamen. They were recorded simply as interesting folklore.

"What's all this?" the Secretary asked, picking up one of the stiff old volumes.

"Clues," Dinosaur replied incisively.

The Secretary regarded him doubtfully.

"You haven't been drinking, I hope?"

"I never celebrate my victories before they happen," Blye retorted. "And I'm not within sight of one yet. Still," he continued more seriously, "one thing has led to another, and I'm beginning to get a glimmer of light on what Okada *may* have had up his sleeve. Notice that I don't say he did have what I am beginning to suspect; I only claim that he may have had."

"When I tell you what Doi has asked my men to look for," the Secretary laughed, "I imagine your theory will go glimmering."

"Then you had better not tell me. Mine is a good theory, and I don't want to smash it till I have had a chance to admire its crazy beauty. A chemist might like it; a geologist certainly would. I doubt whether you would care for it, so I shan't bore you with the details."

"In that case you don't hear what Doi asked the secret service to find. Unless I'm mistaken, that young Jap is working on a theory as crazy as yours, if not crazier. So you had better let me have yours."

Blye considered. He was aching for an opportunity of talking out what had been slowly maturing for

weeks in his mind, but hesitated lest the hard-headed Secretary pooh-pooh it as fantastic, and treat him as an unpractical visionary.

"One thing has led to another," he said, opening his confession. "It all began in those rolls of Okada's that Doi—or Kameda—burnt before we could get hold of them. I told you how some of the drawings reminded me of these old woodcuts," he reached for a book, "in this reprint of an early Jesuit edition of *De re metallica.* The more I thought about the resemblance, the more obvious it became that there was something stronger than coincidence uniting those rolls and these pictures. In at least four instances the postures of the laborers are exactly the same. I conclude —as a working hypothesis only—that the Jesuit father who made these woodcuts, or who superintended the artist who did make them, had in mind the original drawings on Okada's rolls or on another set roughly like them. The rolls were Korean. Kameda knew that much; I suspect him of knowing a lot more that he hasn't told. But let that go. The resemblance of the Jesuit woodcuts to the antique Korean drawings was an obvious clue. Even a blind man would have tried to follow it."

"And it has led you to all this?" the Secretary asked curiously, indicating the old travel journals.

"Naturally. The next step was to search the early records of travel in Cho-Sen—Korea—for the accounts of the first missionaries. My thirty-five dollars wasn't wasted on those library flappers after all. They have worked on their fellow book-nurses with tears

in their eyes to get them to hunt up early missionary records of the orient. In the past ten days I must have skimmed half a ton of musty old books. There's the cream."

He picked up one of the cracked, calf-bound volumes.

"Listen to this. You will have to excuse my blundering translation. My Latin isn't what it was when I used to hate it in the Boston Latin School. Anyway, here goes."

Like an unprepared boy bluffing through his day's lesson, Dinosaur proceeded to construe a short passage from the easy Jesuit Latin.

" 'Outside the stone wall of the city of Seoul, on the slopes of the mountains beyond or facing'—my Latin isn't good enough to say which—'the West Gate of the city, not far from the road of the Pekin Pass is a huge idol, or image, in solid gold.' "

"That's a lie," the Secretary remarked.

"Of course," Dinosaur agreed. "Or if there ever was such an image there, I'll bet it's gone by now. But listen to the rest of what this truthful traveller has to say about the image. 'Now this idol is hewn into the smooth shape of a man's tooth.' "

"What!" the Secretary exclaimed, jumping out of his chair.

"It made me jump too," Blye acknowledged. "No ordinary liar invented that yarn."

"Yes, but you don't know——."

"Wait a minute. I haven't come to the really interesting part. 'This idol is esteemed by the devil-wor-

shippers of Cho-Sen as a sure cure for the toothaches which afflict them for their sins. Though they be freezing with cold, they lay their tumid'—I guess that's the right word—'cheeks along the icy gold. In this way some say they are cured of their toothaches.' The rest of this is a learned discussion, which I can't follow, by the holy father to prove that if the Koreans really were cured of their toothaches by rubbing their faces on the golden image like a lot of cats, it was not a true miracle but a delusion invented by the devil in order that they might be technically damned. Personally I should think hell would feel quite pleasant after rubbing a toothache against a frozen lump of gold."

"Is there such a stone or image anywhere near Seoul?" the Secretary asked tensely.

"That's the point of the joke," Blye replied. "There is. The people use it to this day as a cure for toothache, even when the temperature is twenty below zero. I have checked up on the facts beyond doubt. All the modern travel books give a page or two to what they call 'an interesting superstition.' Most of them refer to it as the Toothstone. Two state that some of the more ignorant pilgrims from the mountains, who come to be cured, call it the Tooth of Gold. The name is easily explained. Gold is as precious in Cho-Sen as elsewhere, and anything precious or rare comes to be described as 'golden,' just as with us."

"So that's your explanation, is it?" the Secretary asked. "Wait till you hear mine. But what about your clue?"

"That is the impossible part to make reasonable," Blye confessed. "So I shan't try, more than to say this. It doesn't matter whether that tooth is made of gold or baked mud. As a matter of fact all modern travellers state that it is just a huge, isolated pinnacle of rock that winds, heat and frost have weathered into the shape of a tooth. If we have natural profiles of George Washington all through the Rocky Mountains, I don't see why the Koreans shouldn't have their precious tooth. And it is precious beyond words, for it occasionally does cure a toothache. That is the clue. Okada was a chemist, not a missionary. So he did not lay the good effects of the stone to 'the craft and subtlety of the devil,' as they say on Sunday mornings, but to Mother Nature. That's good enough for me. It satisfied Okada."

"Now let me tell you," the Secretary began, "what my theory is."

"Go ahead," Blye encouraged him. "It can't be more optimistic or crazier than mine."

"In the first place, Doi has set my secret service men to hunting for Okada's gold tooth. Do you get the point?"

Blye looked puzzled.

"Can't say that I do."

"You are not surprised," the Secretary asked, incredulously, "that Doi should be interested in a gold tooth, and Okada's at that?"

"Not after learning how the Koreans cure toothache," Blye admitted offhandedly. "Nothing on earth can surprise me after that."

"So you see nothing extraordinary in Doi's anxiety about Okada's gold tooth?"

"Nothing at all, except Doi's colossal stupidity. The Emperor should have sent someone with brains under his hat."

"The brainy men can't be trusted," the Secretary explained, "at least in Japan. Besides, this whole affair had to be kept strictly in the family. Now, as to your mysterious theory, I'll wager you are wrong in at least one important detail. That hypothetical gold tooth of Okada's is not so unimportant as you say it is. Take my word for it, Doi knows what he is doing."

"What will you bet on it?" Dinosaur inquired lazily.

"Well, I don't want to rob you. Make it a dinosaur egg against a thousand dollars. I want one of those things as a paperweight."

"I'll take the bet but you won't get the egg. Please let me hear your theory."

"Well, here it is, and it makes everything fit in beautifully. This 'Toothstone' that your Jesuit traveller described was covered over once with a sheath of solid gold. During one of the Chinese invasions the Koreans stripped the rock of its heavy gold sheath —there may have been hundreds of tons of it!—and hid it somewhere in the mountains. Somehow or another Okada came across those old rolls describing the war and the burying of the gold. I agree with you that Okada is no fool. Would he leave valuable directions like those lying about loose? He would not. The first thing he would do would be to destroy the particular

roll giving directions how to reach the gold. Doi and old Tanabe found allusions to the cache of gold in the other rolls, but of course they could not find the essential directions because Okada had destroyed them."

"That's very ingenious," Blye remarked with genuine warmth. "Go ahead and finish. Then I'll see if I can demolish your theory."

"You may or you may not be able to. Now what would Doi think when he came across all this evidence?"

"Almost anything. He strikes me as a fool."

"Sometimes a fool hits the bull's-eye. Wouldn't it be reasonable to infer that Okada knows all about that hidden sheath of gold and how to get at it?"

"Provided it exists."

"Why shouldn't it exist? You can't destroy gold. It isn't like the missing rolls. So Doi naturally sets my men onto the gold tooth. What is his object? He may suspect that Okada has already found the gold and concealed it somewhere in this country. Or there is the other possibility that somewhere among Okada's effects there are clues referring to the gold. If my men find such clues they will of course report them to Doi, and to me too, incidentally. So whichever way it goes, whether the gold actually is in America or not, Doi is almost certain to discover some clue which will lead him to what the Emperor wants, namely, that hoard of gold."

Blye gazed at the Secretary with frank admiration.

"Your theory is certainly striking. There is only one thing the matter with it as far as I can see. It is too obvious. In fact it is obviously false."

"You seem pretty sure. Why do you think so?"

"It would take too long to explain in detail. The easiest way to prove your theory is wrong is for me to find what Okada was trying to hide. Then if it doesn't turn out to be a gold cap for a huge rock tooth, your theory is demolished, as I understand it."

"Yes, do you want to raise our bet?"

"No," said Dinosaur. "I'm a modest man, and after all I may be wrong, You see, my idea of oriental subtlety doesn't coincide with yours."

"But you have not yet explained why Doi should have suspected the existence of the gold, or the gold tooth, at all."

"It is just what a man would naturally infer from any veiled allusion to the real thing. Do you suppose for a moment that if there is anything of real value behind all this, the man who made those rolls would set down a minute description of it in all the colors of the rainbow? Not at all. He would refer to it only vaguely, in metaphors and symbolical drawings. What would you think of some Hottentot who happened to overhear us talking of the Golden Rule and then started digging up the streets of Boston with a steam shovel to find the gold? Doi is going to make the Emperor's fortune in exactly the same way. No, the 'tooth' is called 'golden' because it cures toothache, and for no other reason. Take that from me."

"Certainly, and one large dinosaur egg too."
"All right. We'll see."

A few days later the Secretary had his revenge, for he succeeded in thoroughly mystifying Blye. The secret service men reported first to Doi and then to the Secretary of State that they had at last made connections with the Shortridge dentist.

The fact which they learned was curious. It seems that about six months previously Geraldine, who was a regular patient, came in complaining of an aching tooth on the left upper side. The dentist had already filled this tooth—it was a back molar, with 'composition,' as it would not show and there was no point in filling it with gold or porcelain. The cavity was rather a large one, and the process of cleaning out the composition to get at the seat of the supposed trouble made it slightly larger. Although Geraldine complained of pain the dentist could find nothing wrong. He painted the interior with iodine and a mixture to stop the alleged 'pain,' sealed the cavity with guttapercha, and sent her home to await developments. She returned three days later to keep her appointment, and reported that everything had been satisfactory. The dentist disinfected the tooth. He was about to fill it when she objected.

She seemed intensely nervous. Taking a crudely made gold 'crown' from her purse, she asked the dentist to use it for capping the affected tooth. He declined, because the tooth did not need crowning. Never-

theless, much to his surprise, she insisted, saying that if he did not do as she asked she would go elsewhere. Her agitation puzzled him more than the unusual request. The latter might have been merely feminine obstinacy, and the insistence that he use the old crown a confession of poverty. Thinking to talk her into a reasonable frame of mind the next time her teeth needed attention, he did as she asked.

The crown, he remembered was of a pale, soft gold, poorly made. In fact it looked like the work of an amateur, possibly of Geraldine herself. He could not of course use it as it was, so he melted it down in his laboratory, rolled it out into a sheet, and made a fresh crown. All through the process Geraldine watched him like a hawk. She insisted on gathering up the scraps of gold and keeping them. When the crown was finally adjusted she asked for her bill. Considering that he had used her own gold, the dentist said that five dollars would be right.

Geraldine showed great relief, he thought, on hearing that she was only to be charged a nominal amount. She paid him with a ten dollar bill and, according to his account, pocketed the change with a sigh of thankfulness.

Blye frowned in a puzzled way when he heard this story.

"I may as well acknowledge it," he said to the Secretary, "this gold crown of Miss Shortridge's doesn't fit into my theory. It begins to look as if Okada really did have a gold tooth after all. Doi may be on the right track."

"And you on the wrong?"

"Not necessarily. I still stick to the main outlines of my theory. This fact will have to be fitted in later."

"Well, in any case I think we can take it as obvious, whether it agrees or not with your theory, that Miss Shortridge's gold crown came originally from Okada. It is his gold tooth."

"It must have been his gold tooth, as you say, that Geraldine palmed off on the dentist. But why, in the name of common sense? I give it up."

The Secretary shot him a shrewd glance.

"I don't believe you're so mystified as you make out."

Dinosaur ignored the compliment.

"What are the secret service men going to do about it?" he asked.

"Wait till Miss Shortridge returns to Somerville and then have it out with her. She's visiting a friend in Lynn. According to her mother she will be back this evening. Sorry I can't stop over to see the fun, but they want me back in Washington to-morrow morning. I must leave to-night."

When Geraldine failed to put in an appearance at ten o'clock that evening, Mrs. Shortridge called the Meachams in Lynn by long distance. She nearly fainted when Marjorie informed her that she had not seen Geraldine for six weeks. Mrs. Meacham had not been to New York or farther than Boston for over a year.

Mr. Shortridge took matters in hand and called the police.

"Another girl left home," the sergeant remarked as he summoned the detectives. "Find her, boys."

He suggested certain sections of Boston in which it might be profitable to begin the search. Then he sent out two men to Somerville to follow the trail from that end.

Their first clue appeared the next morning, when the flustered cashier from the tea room turned up at the police station with the valuable platinum and sapphire ring which Geraldine had so carefully pledged for her excess breakfast. She was certain from the descriptions in the papers and from the published photographs that it was Miss Shortridge who had left the ring.

When Blye read the news he felt suddenly nauseated. With a vicious oath he tore the newspaper in two and flung it across the room.

"She's gone to her Jap," he said bitterly. "Let her go then. I'm done with her."

But he could not bring himself to continue this stoical philosophy. He bought all the extras throughout the day and studied them minutely. When the evening paper printed the story of the pledged ring he began to recover his admiration for Geraldine.

"She's clever," he muttered. "Okada hasn't monopolized the brains in this little play. Why did she make the cashier take that ring when the girl didn't want it? Why? It's obvious. So that these fool papers will broadcast it that she's stony broke. She had nothing but the price of half a breakfast in her purse and that ring when she left the house. She blew in the money

and hocked the ring. Therefore she was flat when she walked out of the tea-room. Simple, isn't it? She can't be far from Somerville—say Boston at the farthest—because she had no money to buy a ticket. Most convincing! But I wonder who sent her the money to buy transportation, for I'll bet she's on her way to Japan right now. And how did the man get the money to her? I'll break Okada's damned neck for him if ever we meet!"

CHAPTER IX

LOOKING BACK

THE winter in Cho-sen, the Land of the Morning Calm, had been bitterly cold, and in spite of the Korean saying, 'three cold, four warm,' there was as yet no sign of a break in the freezing weather. All had suffered, rich and poor, but the poor most, with a cynical, Asiatic indifference to discomfort. The water carriers clinking through the streets of Old Seoul with their swinging buckets filled with the ice which they had cracked and chipped from the frozen wells, seemed not to mind the slowly bleeding gashes on their blue knuckles, or to be aware that their freezing toes protruded from their rotten paper shoes. They went about their business in the older sections of the city as usual. Life might be bad, but in their devil-ridden philosophy there was worse to come. So why complain of a merely transitory torment?

From the garish entrance to the spick and span New Daibutsu hotel, recently erected by the enterprising Japanese, a tall, dignified figure in a straight fur coat emerged and inspected the weather. It was an ideal day for his project, cold as the antarctic, clear as crystal, with the last trace of moisture precipitated from the motionless air. It was the sort of day that

cats like, when the lightest of strokes will set their glossy fur crackling like an electric machine.

The tall Japanese in the long fur coat surveyed with satisfaction the almost incredible changes that had taken place in Seoul since his fellow countrymen had started in earnest to civilize the place. Among the old mud and wooden shanties of the ancient regime several modern brick buildings, at least one a good school, stood out with an almost American air of brazen newness. The incredibly dirty streets of the old order had been widened here and there and kept as reasonably clean as Asiatics can be expected to keep a street. More than one had been civilized completely, and rendered hideous beyond hope of redemption, by the ugly parallel rows of the telephone poles which are the chief glory of western civilization.

The old picturesqueness was fast going, routed by the blatant energy of young Japan, but with it was also disappearing the old filth. Okada, like most men of scientific training, preferred sewers to scenery, if it is a question of having one but not both. Therefore, although he regretted the passing of the old as he had known it twenty years previously, he did not deplore the advent of the new with its decent sanitation.

Nor did he repine for the old inn of a former visit twenty years before when, night after night, he shared his so-called bed with legions of vermin unnamable. He had spent a dreamless eight hours in a clean bed between sheets fresh from the modern Japanese laundry run in connection with the hotel, and he had eaten his light breakfast from modern dishes that had

been washed the night before, So he did not altogether regret the subjection of the quaint Koreans to law, order, decency, cleanliness, and commercial exploitation. He at least had spent a comfortable night.

Satoru Okada, now forty-three, though still in appearance under thirty, was the eldest son of a noble but impoverished race. For generations in the faded old tradition his forefathers had lived or died for the Son of Heaven, feasting with him when he routed his enemies, cheerfully disembowelling themselves when disaster overtook him. Okada's family followed the modernization of Japan with regret. To them she seemed to be losing more than she gained. They admitted that some western innovations were good, and used all their aristocratic influence to exclude everything but what met their approval. Naturally they did not prosper. Obstructionists are seldom the most popular persons at court.

Being hopelessly old-fashioned according to modern Japanese views, Tetusuzo Okada, Satoru's father, shuddered with horror at the thought of his son's becoming a trader like the energetic young men of less noble families. In spite of pinching poverty, Satoru must remain a gentleman. The definition of gentleman is universal. In Japan, as with us, it means a man who does not make money. Scholars are gentlemen as a rule, because they seldom make anything at all. It was decided that Satoru should become a scholar of the most aimless type imaginable.

At the Imperial University Satoru Okada attached

himself to Professor Tanabe, the renowned scholar who had the reputation of being able to decipher at sight any book, bronze, porcelain, parchment, roll, or monument in whatsoever attempt at visible speech it might be written. Not content with his reading and knowledge of all the oriental dialects ever invented, Tanabe had spent much time in elaborating a new language of his own, with written characters innumerable, which he declared was destined by heaven (his heaven) to become the universal solvent for all the ills of Asia. This Japanese-Chinese version of Esperanto may have been all that Tanabe claimed for it. If so, he alone knows, for no other living man ever has succeeded in understanding a single sentence. However that may be, it proved young Okada's linguistic downfall. He had done brilliantly thus far in his course; ancient Japanese, proto-Chinese, all but prehistoric Korean and Tibetan he learned as a child learns its mother tongue, greedily, and with no appreciable effort. Tanabe was enchanted. Here at last was a proper young man with whom he might converse at length in the tongue of tongues.

Okada endured the etymological intricacies of the new invention for a month. Then the endless refinements of Tanabe's masterpiece suddenly and decisively aroused him to a great truth. He saw, or thought he saw, that the dreary futilities of philology were perhaps a decent occupation for mediaeval minds, but that certainly they are no reputable pursuit for a twentieth-century intelligence. Having seen the light he turned

his back on the profitless shadow. He rudely left the room and dropped into a lecture on general chemistry just across the hall

The chemist, Professor Narumi, was an exceptionally clear lecturer and a man of worldwide fame as a discoverer. His personality at once attracted Okada. He was clear, cold, and concise. Not a single flower of rhetoric decorated the orderly presentation of his ideas. If there was a point to see, he saw it and went directly to it. At the end of the lecture Okada followed Narumi to his laboratory and inquired what the requirements were for enrolling in his course. Narumi looked the applicant over, asked him several questions about his previous training, decided that the young man was ignorant but intelligent, and told him what to do. By working hard at the elementary parts of chemistry, and faithfully submitting to laboratory discipline, he might be ready in two years to profit by such a course of lectures as Narumi was then giving. Okada left that conference resolved to become a chemist.

Until now Okada had never offered his mind material or problems worthy of its efforts. He himself was astonished at his own powers as they rapidly developed under the gruelling self discipline. At last he had found his trade. He was a born chemist.

By the end of six months he felt that he might make his second call on Narumi. The professor treated him to a searching examination which occupied three hours. At the end of it he turned Okada loose in the organic laboratory with the order to prepare two difficult com-

pounds. Eight hours later Okada emerged, and went in search of Narumi at the latter's house. The professor was satisfied. He would examine the compounds the following day. Although he did not show it, he was surprised that Okada should think he had done what was asked in eight hours. The next morning he was even more surprised to find the work accurate. Narumi made Okada his assistant, gave him special instruction, and quickly trained him to be expert in the most delicate technique of the newer chemistry.

All this was now twenty years in the past. Okada remembered it as vividly, and as poignantly, as if it had happened but yesterday. As he strode along through the icy morning air to the West Gate of Seoul, he returned in thought to the happier morning of the first day of his second visit, fifteen years previously, to Korea. It was but the second time that he had ever been outside of Japan. As a vigorous, intellectual young man of twenty-eight he had enjoyed every breath of that free holiday in the Land of the Morning Calm, and now he looked back on it with longing and regret. Although his first, fresh happiness was gone forever, yet it seemed to be frozen into the still air around him, a part till the end of eternity of the very structure of time. On his former visit he had combined business with his holiday, but it was a pleasant business, a commission for his revered teachers, Tanabe and Narumi.

Then, a year later, had come a third visit.

Okada had left Tokyo for Cho-sen and had never been heard of since the day he embarked. The theory

most commonly held by his former associates was that he had reached Fuzan only to be robbed and murdered on his way thence to Seoul. The captain of the steamship remembered him on board, and thought he recalled seeing him leave with the other passengers when they reached port, but he could not be sure. And so Saturo Okada dropped from sight.

When, fourteen years before, Okada left Tokyo for his third visit to Cho-sen, he was on a mission to Seoul for Narumi alone. He did not execute his commission, for deliberately he failed to reach Seoul.

Young Okada and Narumi well past middle age disagreed irreconcilably on the destiny of Japan. Okada's ideal for her true and proper greatness was not that of his teacher, whose cold fanaticism for things modern consumed him like a fire. The younger man, the Samurai, concealed his unalterable hatred for his teacher's blind nationalism, and sought the only possible resolution of the discord between their natures. He eliminated himself. To have stayed longer with his teacher might easily have resulted in the drastic triumph of the hated modernism. Okada disappeared just at the critical moment, when his help was necessary to Narumi in the latter's dream—which was more than an idle vision—of making Japan modern to the last degree, and incidentally mistress of the world, was about to be realized.

Okada passed through the West Gate and crunched his icy way over the solid, snowcrusted rock of the Pekin Pass. Presently he left the highway and fol-

lowed a well trampled path over the snowy slope to the strange, isolated rock known to all Cho-sen as the Toothstone. In spite of the blistering cold a crowd of sufferers was already gathered about the tiny altar at its base, waiting their turn to be swindled out of their savings for the privilege of rubbing their swollen cheeks against the frozen stone that seared them like a branding iron.

For a few minutes Okada stood off and watched the pilgrims, as one after another they parted with their poor treasures to the voracious priest in charge, and then hopefully laid their aching faces to the stone. Faith, or the sudden shock of a paralyzing cold, temporarily stunned the pain in the aching tooth of an occasional victim, but the majority received in return for their savings only the usual wages of credulity, and retired howling, to be cursed by the priest as unbelievers. Those who had a string or two of cash left were exhorted to give up all to the gods and earn surcease of misery by atoning for their greed and lack of faith. It was an old game, as stale as fraud, and it seemed to amuse Okada. Being a Samurai he had little sympathy for those who gave way to pain. On the other hand he showed only contempt for the fat, well-fed scoundrel running the miraculous shrine.

Brushing aside the sufferers, Okada flung the man a silver coin, worth half a ton or more of the brassy cash offered by the victims, and intimated that he wished the exclusive use of the stone for about two minutes. On the promise of another coin when Okada

finished, the priest chased the pilgrims out into a wide, wondering circle, and gave the Japanese gentleman the freedom of the stone.

Okada had not come to cure a toothache, but to perform a simple scientific experiment. From the deep pocket of his fur coat he drew a small gold leaf electroscope in a glass jar, of the inexpensive type to be found in any high school physical laboratory. Going up to the Toothstone he tested it at twenty or more widely separated spots for traces of electricity or for evidence of radioactivity in the rock. There was no indication whatever. Smashing the electroscope against the rock—a devilish proceeding in the eyes of the priest and his dupes—Okada turned his back on the alleged miracle.

"Another superstition," he exclaimed contemptuously in English as he tossed the priest the promised coin. "It seems to pay."

He made his way back toward the West Gate, pursued by the imprecations of the priest. The smashing of a silly bottle had ruined his trade for the day. Not one of all that crowd of miserable wretches would trust his throbbing tooth to a stone which had just been bewitched before their very eyes.

Okada guessed correctly that Narumi himself had performed an identical experiment years previously when at last he gave up his favorite pupil and colleague for dead. And, knowing what he now knew, namely that the Toothstone was just a worthless lump of rock and nothing more, Okada could appreciate the disappointment which Narumi must have felt.

Okada himself had expected to find nothing. But Narumi had pinned his hopes on what he believed he must find, and which all along Okada felt sure did not exist. For he had confided to the master only a minor part of his own surmises. To have told all might easily have put Narumi in possession of his ideal. It was to conceal once and for all his fuller knowledge from Narumi that Okada 'died.'

As Okada retraced his way to the New Diabutsu he relived, in spite of himself, the events which had forced him into voluntary exile from his beloved country. The day when old Tanabe, some three years after Okada's desertion of ancient languages for modern chemistry, came to beg his former pupil's assistance on some difficult texts in the ancient Korean, was the beginning of the end.

Tanabe, as an enthusiastic archaeologist, was in the habit of making long journeys on the continent of Asia in search of old monuments to decipher, old manuscripts to buy for the Imperial Library, and old porcelains or rusted bronzes to enrich the collections of the Emperor's museum. On his last trip to Korea, from which he had just returned when he sought out Okada, he had been more than usually successful. Penetrating far to the north, almost to Manchuria, he had visited all but inaccessible villages and secluded monasteries in the search for antique treasures. Occasionally the owners of all this old stuff, being entirely ignorant of its great value, eagerly parted with it for worthless trifles of modern Japanese manufacture. Only the so-called monks, too ignorant to read or

appreciate the priceless historical records in their keeping, showed a reluctance to parting with their unknown treasures.

According to Tanabe's account he finally managed to barter the monks out of what he coveted. According to Okada's guess the guileless old antiquarian had yielded to an irresistible temptation and appropriated without leave from his hosts the cream of what he desired as a lover desires his mistress.

However he acquired them, Tanabe undoubtedly possessed a dozen or so of the most curious semi-historical rolls that ever came out of Asia. Among them were six, richly illustrated, which he confessed himself unable to comprehend. The mere decipherment did not bother him. What passed his understanding was the meaning of what he read. He was a literary man, with no scientific training. Allusions to physical science as broad as the side of a barn would have found him blind and deaf. When moreover the scientific flavor was heavily masked under a thick sauce of legendary nonsense, plain jargon, and metaphorical obfuscation, Tanabe not only lost his senses of sight and hearing but his taste as well. In this pass he appealed to Okada to lend him a hand up from his bottomless bog. Only Okada the philological renegade, of all his former and present pupils, had brains enough to offer a suggestion that might be worth hearing.

Okada at once agreed to help, for although he detested his former love he still had a high regard for his first real teacher. He took the six huge rolls and promised to see what he could make of them. He made

a great deal, so much in fact, that before he was through with them he had decided not to share his opinions with old Tanabe.

Almost at the outset of his labors he guessed the meaning of a curious, symbolical statement in one of the rolls which sent him hurrying to Tanabe to ask the old scholar what else, besides bales of pictures, he had 'bought' from the monks in those mountain monasteries. Tanabe acknowledged readily that he had 'picked up' a few trifles of no great archaeological interest—a jade ornament or two, three or four crude pieces of silver jewelry ornamented with coral, and perhaps—yes—a hollow scrap of gold in the shape of a tooth—a thing of little or no value. Might Okada take it as a keepsake? He would have it mounted as a watch charm; it was rather a curious bit, as Tanabe had remarked, a meaningless trifle of no antiquarian importance.

Tanabe generously let his young friend take the curiosity. Possibly at the back of his head was a queer idea that by making Okada an innocent accomplice in his own 'picking up'—Tanabe always wore a garment with capacious sleeves and many pockets on his visits to monasteries—he thereby became less guilty of archaeological indiscretion. Anyhow, Okada got the gold tooth he craved.

Although the pictured rolls which Okada was asked to interpret were themselves extremely old, they were clearly, from internal evidence that would at once strike anyone with a sound philological training, but third or fourth copies of still more ancient works.

According to Tanabe the monks from whom he had 'acquired' the rolls were totally unable to read a single sentence of the ancient script, and were equally powerless to understand the meaning of the multitudes of pictures. Nor, said Tanabe, did any of those learned holy men have the slightest idea as to how their order had obtained the rolls in the first place. The treasures were simply minor items in their archives, handed down from time out of memory. They offered the theory, however, that all six were the life work of some forgotten sage of their order who, as a young man, had travelled among 'the devils to the north'—meaning the unorthodox Koreans beyond reach of the established religion of the main peninsula.

To Okada this did not seem unlikely from what he already had made out from the introductory statements in the rolls themselves. What impressed him more deeply however, was the strong internal evidence that the existing rolls were indisputably laborious copies of older texts, which in turn must have been recopied from more ancient treatises already corrupted by many similar transcriptions reaching clear back, possibly, to the very beginnings of written speech. There were unmistakable traces of older forms of writing, obsolete word stems, verb endings and similar vestiges of evolution in the other parts of speech, with curious, inverted grammatical constructions, which showed all too plainly the forgotten influence of rudimentary forms of the Korean dialects. Tanabe of course had noted all this but, being a mere philologist antiquarian, he missed the significant fact behind it

all, which at once arrested the attention of Okada, the man of an essentially scientific turn of mind.

It seemed so obvious to Okada that he wondered how anyone, especially a keen intelligence like Tanabe, could miss the point. Clearly, works which in the dim past had been considered worthy of preservation through stretches of time so vast that the very language in which they were originally written underwent profound changes, must have been considered by the men who preserved them as records of the very highest importance for the welfare of their race.

Okada might have been inclined to follow the modern idea that the ancients were fools had he not been thoroughly familiar with the evolution of chemistry. The mediaeval alchemists in Arabia and elsewhere certainly compiled a gorgeous jumble of nonsense, but here and there, buried beneath the vast piles of sheer rubbish, there undoubtedly is concealed the germ of many a fertile idea, and occasionally a full-blown scientific discovery of the first magnitude. Okada recalled at least half a dozen such in the mystical recipes of the early Assyrians for making their beautiful colored glass, and in the much later work of the Arabs. Was it not in trying to transmute mercury into gold that the mediaevalists stumbled across the priceless fact—to us if not to them—that mercury is a specific remedy for one of the worst scourges that human folly is heir to? And did not that old Arabian genius, in messing about with his retorts and alembics, blunder upon the sublime art of making sheer grain alcohol, to die shortly after his great discovery, a martyr to science,

of delirium tremens? From his studies as a hobby in the history of chemistry, Okada came to adopt this motto, 'Scorn not the ancients,' whether they be Assyrians, Arabs, Babylonians, Greeks, Chinese, or Koreans. When the guileless old Tanabe called on him for assistance, Okada was ripe for discovery.

Behind all the mystical jargon of the rolls, as obscurely metamorphical as any mediaeval alchemist's carefully disguised parables about 'the King,' 'the Lion,' and all the rest of their cabalistic names for the base or noble metals, Okada detected the unmistakable evidence of some perfectly definite scientific technique. Taken literally, the rolls were sheer nonsense; stripped of their elaborate symbolism they were undoubtedly great treatises on primitive science, the hoarded lore of a race first facing nature as she is, and reading in her open countenance the answers to the perennial riddle of common things. But what was the character of the scientific technique which these earliest explorers of the so-called obvious were thus carefully concealing beneath masses of symbols?

His knowledge of chemical history gave Okada his clue. It is a commonplace of scientific philology that some of the oldest words in almost any language are the names of the metals. These persist, changed of course in details, but still essentially in the same stem forms, long after the races which coined them have perished. Thus Assyria, dead and buried for over two thousand years, still lives on in some of our common English names for the minerals which her artists prized and used just as we do, such as sapphire and

cobalt. These primitive names of the metals seem in some way to be as hard and as relatively indestructible as the metals themselves. At any rate they have survived long after their descriptive significance has been lost. Metals and metallurgy are interwoven inextricably with the history of civilization from its very dawn.

Following his reasonable clue, Okada stripped the symbols, one after another, from the pictures and written accounts of the ancient rolls, and identified easily the least obscure of the directions with those for the primitive metallurgy of iron, gold, copper, lead, antimony, bismuth, cobalt, and perhaps tin. Then he got a shock.

These old workers in metals, possibly the first makers of colored glass, had accidentally stumbled across a fact of the very first magnitude. They had observed that pure white glass, containing nothing but quartz sand and the usual alkali, when exposed to certain "rotten rocks" gradually became suffused with a delicate violet hue. Those primitive metallurgists, perhaps for generations, had followed this elusive clue to one of the supreme secrets of nature without much success. Then, all in one man's lifetime, further 'accidental' discoveries were made regarding the rich ores with which they worked. From one of the 'rotten rocks,' found in abundance in the 'mountains to the north,' they succeeded in melting out large quantities of a new, pale yellow gold, softer than common gold. The rocks from which this plastic gold was obtained were also rich in quicksilver. In fact the characteristic

crimson of the cinnabar which crusted these rocks had first attracted the ancient metallurgists. They seemed to make no use of the mercury. The art of silvering glass for mirrors was of much later development; the earliest workers seemed to have prized the 'fluid metal' chiefly as a great natural curiosity. The gold they used for ornaments, decoration and possibly for religious purposes—Okada could not be sure of the meaning. So this unexpected discovery of a rich source of the precious metal in their 'rotten rocks' was recorded as a scientific event of the highest importance.

A generation or two later it was observed, Okada inferred from the tradition recorded in the rolls, that the pale soft gold when worn as a charm against evil spirits was decidedly effective. Those whose charms were of the 'new gold' were less subject to certain forms of disease than others who trusted in amulets of the old, 'red gold.'

It was this fact and another recorded in a later 'history' which sent Okada hurrying to old Tanabe. The second fact, if more than a mystical theory to account for an inferred truth of nature, was of such supreme importance that Okada decided to tell Tanabe that the rolls were just one incomprehensible jargon of religious rites from beginning to end.

When he had obtained the gold tooth from Tanabe, he set about experimenting at once. At first he did not take Narumi into his confidence. Narumi for years had been experimenting in the most advanced branch of modern inorganic chemistry, hoping to accomplish what theory predicted must be true but which experi-

ment failed to reveal. He published little on this work, and nothing of any importance. With him it was to be all or nothing in his great life task. If he succeeded, the Emperor should have in his hands the means of making Japan mistress of the world; if he failed of complete success the premature publication of his partial results might well give gifted chemists the clue to the full discovery, and Japan would definitely recede to a subordinate place. He had succeeded already in proving the *scientific* possibility of what he sought; the *practical* application however of the pure science lay, for all he could discover, a thousand years in the future.

It was in the direction of practical applications rather than pure science that Okada began his experiments. Less than a week convinced him that he had finally solved the problem, completely, and by means that a child might operate. It was in strict accordance with accepted chemical theory. The wonder was that no chemist had stumbled across it earlier. The world supremacy of Japan was hers for the taking the moment Okada should inform the Mikado of his discovery and take the simple, easily procurable means of shrouding the discovery in complete secrecy.

Instead of calling in the Emperor to see a carefully disguised version of his experiment in operation, Okada called in his fellow chemist Narumi. He gave no hint of his intention. It was agreed between the chemists that Okada should at once proceed to Cho-Sen in the interests of 'greater efficiency.' This was the motif of Okada's third, and abortive, visit to Seoul. He declared that it would be necessary to take

with him Tanabe's six precious rolls and a certain silver tube. Old Tanabe was easily hoodwinked into believing that Okada wished to take the rolls to Cho-Sen in order to see if there some native scholar might help him to interpret them by the folklore of his people. The reason for taking the priceless tube of 'powdered mineral' was equally simple, but it was not explained to Narumi. Okada would need it as a sort of passport to the monks whom old Tanabe had undoubtedly robbed. By restoring the relic—the carefully concealed gold tooth—to its rightful owners with an apology for the too enthusiastic archaeologist's misdemeanor, he might gain their confidence and possibly be put in touch with clues to what must still exist in the 'mountains to the north' mentioned in the rolls. The silver tube obviously, he convinced the chemist, would be needed in scientific experiments and as a clue to deposits or caches of the 'mineral.'

Such was the plausible reason which Okada the Samurai vouchsafed to Narumi the rabid modernist for wishing to take out of Japan, temporarily only, the most precious thing of all its treasures. By itself, he pointed out, the 'powdered mineral' was insufficient; for complete practical success Narumi must have more. Greater efficiency, drastic supremacy and nothing less, was Narumi's ideal. Okada would see that his old teacher achieved his modern ambition. Tanabe was easily persuaded to lend the six rolls for a period of two months.

And so, laden with the future of Japan, Satoru Okada embarked that morning fourteen years ago at

Nagasaki for Fuzan. That was the last Tanabe and Narumi ever saw of him. The Samurai would make Japan great in his own way, not in Narumi's.

Okada reached the hotel just in time for lunch with a good appetite after his long walk back from the Toothstone. Still thinking of the past he ordered a frugal Japanese repast and then definitely turned his mind to the future. Japan would be great, but not as Narumi dreamed. Okada's plans of fourteen years were now mature, and he had the money to put them into execution. He must wait in Fuzan for his 'accomplice' before he could start north. In the meantime he would purchase supplies in Seoul or Fuzan. He had already ascertained that the enterprising Japanese merchants kept the chemicals for making the highest known explosives and other, more usual, miners' supplies in stock in their modern warehouse. After lunch he would see to making the purchases necessary for his plans.

He had never hinted to Narumi the tenth part of what he deciphered from the rolls. His plans for the immediate future were based on his private knowledge, which now at last he was in a position to make practical.

CHAPTER X

PURSUIT

THERE is nothing like a long bout with seasickness for knocking the nonsense out of a young girl's head and making her take a reasonable view of her peccadilloes. Geraldine had been very sick indeed aboard the splendidly appointed *Kaga-Maru* of the N. Y. K. line running from Victoria to Yokahama.

"Oh, what a fool I've been," she moaned more than once, turning her face to the steel wall and praying that she might die before she reached the first stop on the endless voyage to her far destination. More than once she was on the point of asking the steward to send a radio for her, in order that her mother might know she was repentant. Every time however she stopped short of action. Was she indeed sorry for what she had done, or was it merely the pitching and rolling of the steamer which filled her with misgivings of one sort or another? She had almost looked back. Pride got the better of her, and she resolutely turned her eyes 'front,' to face the future she had all but made for herself.

Being young and healthy she did not suffer all the way across the Pacific. About half-way over she recovered sufficiently to be able to take her meals in

public with the rest of the passengers. She was ravenous, poor girl, but she could not eat in peace.

There were two other white passengers on this high class 'all Japanese' boat, a Methodist missionary, red as a rooster, and his faded little hen of a wife, returning to their great work of decently clothing the hairy Ainus. The rest were all Japanese, mostly merchants, bankers, or 'educated' students. These jabbered endlessly in their own chattering tongue, and paid not the slightest attention to the three Americans who sat at the Captain's table.

Naturally the missionary and his wife tried to find out who Geraldine was, whence she had come, and whither she was going all alone on this Japanese boat. They tacitly assumed that she was travelling on an 'all Japanese' steamer to cut expenses like themselves. To their persistent, rather rude questions Geraldine replied vaguely that she going out to teach.

"Where?" the rooster demanded.

"In the Canton Christian College," Geraldine confessed in a fluster. It was the only Asiatic school she had ever heard of.

The rooster clucked with disapproval and turned his small yellow eye full on her.

"Are you aware," he almost crowed, "that the College was closed six months ago by the authorities on account of the Chinese revolution?"

Geraldine was not, and even now she was not sure whether the red rooster was telling the truth or merely lying to torment her. She countered boldly.

"Yes," she said. "They told me when they sent for

me that I might have to wait a few weeks in Shanghai before beginning my work."

"But wouldn't it have been better," the little hen cackled triumphantly, "to take a boat directly from San Francisco to Shanghai?"

"No," Geraldine answered shortly. "I live in Vancouver."

"Even then it would have been cheaper," the hen persisted, as only a hen who has once started to cross the road in front of an automobile knows how to persist.

Geraldine demolished her to sour silence by a sharp retort.

"I wanted to see something of Japan. And I can afford to pay for it, if you really want to know."

After that meal she boldly changed her place in the saloon and no longer sat with the so-called whites at the Captain's table. She greatly preferred the absorbed Japanese who left her strictly alone. The stewards and officers made no objection to her change, as she had carefully selected a vacant place. If she disliked her fellow countrymen it was no affair of theirs. She had their silent, respectful sympathy.

That change of tables was the very best thing that could possibly have happened to the romantic young Geraldine. Could the two pious fowls at the Captain's table have guessed what a terrific turmoil was going on beneath the calm exterior of their pretty compatriot, they would have gathered her under their fussy wings, they would even have become to her as a father and a mother, in order to save her erring soul

from everlasting perdition. And their good intentions undoubtedly would straightway have driven her directly into the arms of the devil. It needed just such a piece of stiff-necked, thick-headed stupidity as they would have favored her with to tip the trembling balance of her life definitely downward to a bottomless mess. The soul-searching questionings of her seasickness and her change of place in the saloon saved Geraldine as not all the preaching in the world could have saved her.

Before marrying a man or a woman, as the case may be, it is always a good plan to break bread and share salt at least half a dozen times with the loved one's entire family. If love survives that fiery ordeal unsinged, marriage will probably not be a phenomenal failure. If on the other hand father-in-law to be is deficient in the proper technique of the toothpick according to the fastidious standards of his prospective son-in-law, or if the bride's mother to be cannot dispose of a soft fried egg without butchering it and herself as if she were celebrating a Roman holiday, it will be well for the young man and woman to cancel their mutual obligations immediately after the feast. Short of a trial marriage there is nothing quite so intimate as eating breakfast or dinner with the new family. Long before the *Kaga-Maru* docked at Yokahama Geraldine's soul and body were saved.

Looking back on her feverish young dream of love she wondered what ever had hypnotized her into believing that she could love a Japanese whose age, she now guessed when it was too late to be of much use,

must be at least twice her own. What had made him so attractive? He obviously was not a rake, as Lord Byron is reputed to have been. In his own way Okada was as handsome as Byron, probably the most successful lady-killer on record, and even handsomer perhaps, because he was physically perfect. Geraldine's riddle is as old as the sphinx and, according to the professional feminists, as unanswerable. It may be suggested however that what attracts young girls to the haughty Byrons and cold Okadas of society is not intriguing rakishness or fascinating aloofness, because these qualities are common enough, being shared by most well-bred fops, but something much rarer—sheer intellect. Whatever is rare is said to attract a woman, and intelligence, Heaven only knows, is the rarest thing in society.

Whatever may be the correct theory does not concern us here. Geraldine was cured of her green sickness. The doubt which Jim Blye had first sown in her mind the morning he boldly called at her house had indeed taken root. Now the rocking of the boat and the table manners of her fellow passengers had nursed the seed, till it burst into a beautiful, blossoming plant. She vowed she would never again be silly or sentimental. But she would not look back, much less return to her home. Having set her face to the road she would follow it to her own end. Whither it would lead she did not know. For the moment she was satisfied to feel that it was not leading her where it might. Okada in the Shortridge house, eating American food with her own father and mother, was a different be-

ing, she felt, from Okada in his native country surrounded by his own friends and relatives, not one of them white. There is something in race prejudice after all; otherwise we should never hear of it. It may be wrong and stupid, but it exists. That is the fact.

The evening that the Boston papers carried the story of Geraldine Shortridge's 'pledged' ring, there were exactly four persons in the world who thought they knew where she was going. First, there was Geraldine herself. At that early date she knew no better. Second, Saturo Okada in distant Seoul felt certain of Geraldine's movements. He had called her, and she was coming. In three or four weeks he could return to the seaport of Fuzan to await her arrival from Nagasaki. Okada felt sure of himself and equally sure of the nineteen-year-old American girl. Third there was Jim Blye in his Cambridge lodging just off Concord Avenue. He was ready to swear that 'Miss Shortridge,' as he now habitually thought of her, was en route to a shameless rendezvous with 'her damned Jap.' Last, and most important of all, Mr. Kameda, Japanese consul in Boston, thought he knew all about Geraldine Shortridge and exactly why she was on her way to her destination.

To these four it is perhaps fair to add the Secretary of State. He was a canny man, a man from Missouri, and he had not yet been "shown." Nevertheless he did form a pretty definite opinion when the secret service men in Boston called him up in Washington by long distance. Without actually committing himself he surmised that Miss Shortridge was even then on her way

to meet Okada and to restore to him his precious gold tooth. He wondered what Mr. Doi would do now that the United States men had found out all about Geraldine's mysterious visit to her dentist. Unless he was greatly in error, Geraldine had the gold tooth which Doi coveted and which had so greatly upset the preconceived theory of his acute young friend Blye. Probably, the Secretary speculated, Messrs. Doi and Tanabe would presently apply for transportation back to San Francisco.

Of the four or five theorists, Kameda had the strongest right to his hypothesis, for what the little consul had actually done in the matter of Geraldine's disappearance was childishly simple. Two weeks before she sat for the last time in a Somerville tea-room to think out her future, a neat package with a Korean postmark arrived at the Japanese consulate in Boston. It was addressed to 'the Consul.' On opening it, Kameda found a second package, carefully wrapped and sealed, without the slightest mark of identification on the outside, and a short note in Japanese addressed to 'The Consul.' The note requested the consul to see that the enclosed package be delivered intact to Miss Geraldine Shortridge, *and to no other*. Miss Shortridge's address in Somerville was given so that she might easily be found.

It required no great ingenuity, although it took several hours, to remove the seals from the package without breaking them. The contents were sufficiently enlightening to one who knew as much about the Shortridge-Okada affair as did Kameda. There was

first a considerable sum of money in American bills of one hundred dollar denominations. Kameda guessed correctly what Okada had done with at least some of the currency paid him by Mr. Shortridge as salary at five hundred dollars a month. Next there was a first class ticket from Victoria to Yokohama on the *Kaga-Maru* of the N. Y. K. line. Kameda noted with interest that the blue office stamp on the ticket indicated that it had been purchased in Nagasaki, Yokohama. He noticed also, like a connoisseur in details, the date of the sailing from Victoria. Miss Shortridge would have plenty of time to catch her steamer. In fact she would have a week or more in which to think over her sins before it became necessary for her to disappear. Finally there was a scrap of paper with the single word F u z a n in printed English script.

Kameda decided that it would be a shame to send the poor girl off at once, before Mr. Doi had a chance to find out her relations—if any—with his brother Samurai, Saturo Okada. Mr. Kameda himself was intensely interested in what might have lain between Okada and Miss Shortridge.

Although Mr. Doi studiously avoided confiding in the submissive little consul, the latter was not quite so childish as he looked. Mr. Shortridge was a ready and willing source of information. The evening that Kameda went out to Somerville to arrange for Mr. Doi's apprenticeship was an ideal opportunity for talking over the departed Okada's affairs. A still better occasion presented itself when Mr. Doi sent Kameda out to the Shortridge factory to present his resignation

as artist-designer. The irate jeweller was inclined to be confidential, expansive, and abusive. Almost without provocation he told Kameda the whole story of the detectives' absurd questions about Okada's gold tooth and their desire to interview the Shortridge dentist. The dentist, Shortridge added, was then out of town. What did all this prying into their affairs mean, any way?

Kameda could not enlighten him, except to offer the specious theory that the police were acting honestly, and hoping, as they professed, to be able to identify the supposed murderer by his dental work. Privately he held quite a different opinion. Blye was not altogether wrong in his suspicion that the little consul was not so utterly unapt as he professed to be in the art of picking out here and there in the rolls a word whose meaning he might at least guess. Kameda had indeed guessed several, among others the words for gold and tooth. Although he was totally in the dark as to the significance of these commonplace words in their present connection, he conjectured from the frequency with which they occurred that they played some important part in the vanished Okada's life, and therefore in his Samurai ideals for Japan. When Kameda learned from Mr. Shortridge what it was that Doi wished to learn, he did not need to jump to conclusions. The conclusions jumped at him. Old Tanabe had faithfully read the rolls to Doi, and here was Doi, through the United States Secret Service, trying to cross-question the Shortridge's dentist. The

rest of the astute Kameda's deductions are so obvious that it is superfluous to state them.

For two days he hesitated whether or not to let Geraldine escape before the dentist returned, or to let her go. Finally he decided in favor of the latter alternative. The Mikado could be best served by foiling Mr. Doi in his inquiry and permitting the happy lovers, Satoru and Geraldine, to be reunited in distant Fuzan, as Okada's brief annotation in the sealed package plainly requested. Okada and Kameda were brother Samurai. Therefore, Kameda decided with a deep smile, it was for the good of the Japan which they both loved that young Mr. Doi should depart from Boston an ignorant and a sadder man. He at once set about delivering the carefully resealed package to Geraldine.

Kameda himself awaited further developments with interest. When Mr. Doi, in a white rage, ordered Kameda to see about transportation back to Tokyo, the consul was prepared.

The sensational accounts of Geraldine's disappearance in the evening papers irritated Doi intensely. With the stupid detectives he had been confidently awaiting Miss Shortridge's return from Lynn. He had hoped and fully expected to learn at last what had become of the gold tooth which, for reasons not wholly clear, his esteemed father in Japan seemed to prize beyond any possible intrinsic value that it might have.

However ignorant young Mr. Doi may have been, he rightly suspected his father of knowing a great

deal that he did not care to entrust to anyone, even his own son. Doi also suspected with reason that old Narumi, the pestiferous professor of chemistry who was always in conference with his father, knew what was wanted, but was too mean by nature to satisfy the legitimate curiosity of any young man. When therefore the clue snapped in his very hands with the disappearance of Miss Shortridge, he flew into an imperial rage and took it out on Tanabe and Kameda.

The consul at once got into touch with the ambassador in Washington; the ambassador called again on the Secretary of State; the Secretary first set the wheels in motion for a safe, quick return of his country's distinguished guests to their own, and then caught the next train to Boston to hold a council of war with Blye.

Dinosaur met him at the station in answer to a telegram.

"Well?" the Secretary inquired, "where are we now? Up in the air?"

"Not on your life!" Blye exclaimed. "I'm just getting a good start. But have you heard the latest?"

"Miss Shortridge has been found?"

Blye's face clouded.

"No," he replied shortly. "Kameda's going."

"What? Where?"

"Japan. He is sorry to leave me in the lurch without an interpreter for Korea, he says, but orders are orders, especially when given by a Mikado. I just came down here from his place. Oh, the cablegram is genu-

ine enough; I checked up on that. It actually was received at the office. But I'll bet it isn't the only one Kameda has received in the past week. This is merely a decoy to show me. The Emperor orders Kameda to return immediately to Japan. I saw it with my own eyes; I can make out that much Japanese when it's nicely typed in English capitals."

"What's the game now?"

"Plain as day. Kameda cabled some time last week begging to be recalled so that he might tell the Emperor all he knows about Okada, Doi, you, me, and the rest of us—if there are any. That Jap is pretty clever."

"But why on earth didn't he go back with Doi?"

"That also is obvious. Because our tricky friend Kameda has not the slightest intention of returning just yet to Japan. You know as well as I do who young Doi is. Would Kameda have taken all this trouble to avoid travelling with that young fellow if he had actually intended to land in Yokohama? No, take it from me, Kameda is cutting across lots right now to reach Korea in the shortest time possible."

"That may be all very well," the Secretary objected. "But if what you say is true, then it's off with Kameda's head when he and the Emperor do eventually meet."

"They won't meet," Dinosaur said decisively, "for the simple reason that Kameda, I am half inclined to believe, is one of those precious 'Sons of the Samurai' as he says he is. He has gone to join his brother Samurai in Korea. Both are determined that the Em-

peror shall not get what he is after, and they are going to prevent him if possible. All clues, as I have said a dozen times, lead to Korea. Okada and Kameda are going to fight it out there with the Emperor for their Japan versus his."

"I'll bet you another thousand against a second dinosaur egg," the Secretary said thoughtfully, "your theory is essentially wrong, although it may work out in practice."

"I'll take it. That makes two eggs against two thousand dollars—pretty soft. What's wrong with my theory?"

"You are trusting Kameda too far."

"Trusting him? Great Scott, how?"

"By believing he has anything at heart but his own profit."

"Then what is his object in rushing off to Korea in disobedience to the Mikado?"

"Are you sure he's gone there?" the Secretary demanded suspiciously.

Dinosaur looked doubtful for a moment.

"Of course," he exclaimed, brightening. "He was a little too eager to convince me with that cablegram that he is on his way to Japan. So he must have been lying."

"That's obvious," the Secretary admitted. "But precisely *how* was he lying? When you've been in politics as long as I have you will realize that there are twenty ways at least of lying about the simplest fact. Even an amateur in diplomacy can falsify in a dozen distinct ways about the time of day at any given instant. And

Kameda, I'll bet, is no amateur. Well, we shall see. What's your next move?"

"I'm off to Manchuria."

"When? What the deuce for?"

"In less than twenty minutes, when the Overland Limited pulls out of here for San Francisco. I had to put up with an upper berth; all the lowers were gone this morning. And I'll have to chance accommodations on the trans-Pacific to Vladivostok. By leaving this afternoon I can just make steamer connections."

"But why Manchuria? Why don't you follow these clues you think you have, and chase Okada and Kameda up Korea?"

"Exactly what I'm doing. Only I find it quicker to enter by the back door. My clues point to Northern Korea. I can get there before they do, provided they take the usual route, by breaking in on the north from Manchuria. I'm betting that neither of those birds knows the geology of the north as I do. They will have pretty slow going when they get up where it is really wild. It is much easier via Manchuria. I know the ground perfectly. It was there that I found my first dinosaur egg, and I'll bet there are tons more in the vicinity. If I have the luck I expect to have, I shall meet brothers Okada and Kameda toiling up the south side of a mountain that I have climbed from the north. They will have the advantage of me in knowing what they expect to find. I haven't any exact knowledge like Okada's, so I shall be obliged to 'attach' myself to his party."

"What if you miss them?"

"Then I must follow my own guess."

"Which is?"

"Not now. It is too wild. When I collect that two thousand dollars you're going to owe I'll tell you all about how I found the main, crazy clue in those Jesuit books of travel and their editions of *De re metallica,* to say nothing of the Toothstone that really cures toothache."

"I'll now bet you another thousand," said the skeptical Secretary, "that your stone never has cured a single toothache."

"No, sir! Two eggs are enough for any man. Nothing doing. Besides, the modern books agree that the Toothstone does cure toothache."

The Secretary smiled incredulously. "Show me the stone and the toothache it cured."

"Well, there's the gateman shouting my train. What about money? Can you cable me some to Harbin?"

"How much?"

"Make it ten thousand. I shall need a good outfit if I'm to beat Okada and Kameda to the treasure—whatever it may be. Also I shall have to hire a first-class interpreter for Korea now that Kameda has left me in the lurch."

"Just to show that we're not a bunch of tightwads at Washington," the Secretary replied as they hastened to the train, "I'll cable twenty. We expect you to make good."

"I will," Dinosaur promised, shaking hands.

"Remember, if it means a lot to the Japanese Em-

peror, it must mean twice a lot to the President of the United States."

"I know. So long."

"Take care of yourself, and don't believe all your Japanese friends tell you."

The train pulled out. The pursuit had started.

CHAPTER XI

BAFFLED

Mr. Kameda, looking for all the world like an enterprising Japanese commercial traveller about to unload a cargo of shoddy goods liberally stamped with bogus trademarks, leaned over the railing of the little steamer and surveyed the panorama of Fuzan. In disobedience to the Emperor's cablegram which he had shown Blye, the ex-consul was about to set foot on Korean soil. Already he was several days overdue in Yokohama, whither he should have proceeded immediately. He had not the slightest intention of returning to Japan in the immediate future; Korea interested him much more strongly.

Kameda had seen Fuzan from the water many times before. As a young man he had made several pleasant trips to the Land of the Morning Calm. His father was well to do, a rather unusual condition for a professed conservative and a lineal descendant of the blue-blooded Samurai, so young Kameda was denied none of the polish which travel is said to give, and which is so apt a preparation for the consular and diplomatic services.

The port had changed greatly since Kameda's last visit. Everywhere except in Old Fuzan proper at the

head of the bay the visible spirit of his countrymen's aggressive enterprise loomed in devastating, efficient ugliness.

The charm of the quaint old port nestling at the foot of high cliffs, looking out on a placid bay dotted with still charming green islands, was gone forever. New Fuzan is an abomination to an aesthetic eye, and as for a sensitive nose, the city smells not only to the azure heavens above, but far out into the bay, so that the approaching voyager is greeted with a full salvo of the modern Japanese commercial spirit long before he sets foot on the filthy wharf. This perhaps is not to the discredit of the town. Travellers to Alaska are no doubt familiar with the similar fragrance which seems inseparable from any wholesale fishing industry, even when conducted by the most fastidious of peoples, namely ourselves. Kameda's nose sniffed the breeze, and his Samurai soul feasted on the prosperity of his country.

Presently his modern body was compelled to put up with the wretched accommodations provided by his fellow countrymen for tourists, commercial travellers, engineers, imperial commissions of inquiry, and plain scoundrels. He took it philosophically enough. Was not his mission one for which any son of the Samurai would gladly have suffered hunger, thirst, vermin, and *hari-kari?* He was satisfied; it was for the honor of Japan.

Having disposed of his luggage the ex-consul strolled forth on a tour of discovery. The winter had at last loosened its icy grip on Cho-sen, suddenly, as

is its wont, and spring was upon the land. Aimless processions of Korean gentlemen, clad like angels in robes of dazzling white and flower pot hats, paraded the streets disdainful of the hurrying, businesslike Japanese, proceeding with perfect decorum from nowhere in particular to nowhere in general. To Kameda's critical eye these futile processions were a vision of what might happen if all the graves in Chosen suddenly gave up their dead, and the liberated spirits of departed gentlemen without number roamed the city streets in search for their homes, long since demolished in the interests of commerce, efficiency, and sanitation. They one and all were as dead to him as the dinosaurs of his young friend Jim Blye.

Kameda was not just then interested in the welfare of his country's helots, but in his brother Samurai, Satoru Okada. By an easy but nevertheless rigid chain of deductions, he knew that Okada either must be at that moment in Fuzan awaiting the arrival of Miss Shortridge, or on his way elsewhere, possibly with her, possibly without. He did not venture to form an opinion on Okada's affairs of the heart. If Okada really was smitten with Geraldine Shortridge's charms he was a somewhat unusual Japanese and a quite rare Samurai. Still, Kameda admitted, it was possible if improbable. He inclined to the more reasonable theory that Geraldine was to be used till she was useless. Then, as befitted her inferior clay, she would be cast into the first convenient gutter by the noble descendant of the Sons of Heaven. In that case Okada would be proceeding on his way without her, and Kameda must

hasten to overtake his brother Samurai before the latter turned aside from the well travelled highways.

It took no great amount of searching to discover that no white girl answering to Geraldine's description had landed during the preceding three weeks at Fuzan. Okada must therefore be waiting her arrival. Kameda searched the inns, the so-called hotels, and lodging houses, but found no trace of Okada. Could he have erred in his beautifully logical deductions? Almost in despair he resigned himself to waiting until the missing one or his supposed love should put in an appearance. He haunted the docks and the railway stations like a starving, undersized vulture for two days.

Okada was not forgetful of his rendezvous. He calculated the dates within which Geraldine could reasonably be expected to arrive, and deliberately set about preparing for his intended journey to the north until all doubt of her arrival was well past. What did it matter if she had to wait a day or two until he, her master now, should deign to claim her? So he finished his business in Seoul before taking the train across the peninsula to Fuzan.

Kameda's patience was rewarded late on the evening of the second day by seeing Okada alight from the train. He did not reveal himself, but followed at a safe distance until he saw where Okada intended to lodge. Japanese travel to Fuzan is quite brisk, so for obvious reasons Okada selected a Korean inn.

The ex-consul was an expert player of many games. A cardinal principle of his play was to conceal his

hand until forced—which was seldom indeed—to show what he held. Although Kameda was now morally certain that Geraldine must join Okada within a week, he saw no reason for attaching himself to the happy lover until his love arrived, although he had come to Cho-sen with no other end in view. After all, what did he know of his brother Samurai, Saturo Okada? Would it not be the part of wisdom to observe him closely before joining forces with him for the glory of Japan?

There was little difficulty in keeping a rough check on Okada's movements. All Kameda had to do was to loiter near the docks and watch the Japanese steamers come in at a safe distance. Okada met them all. At first he seemed unperturbed by the non-arrival of Geraldine. Then, as boat after boat disgorged its chattering cargo with never an American face in all the crowds, Okada began to show signs of worry. Kameda followed the tall, dignified Samurai in his bold search of inns and so-called hotels. Okada chanced recognition in his anxiety to find what he sought. The knowledge that his own dalliance might have robbed him of his treasure did not exactly ease his mind or make his search pleasanter. As the days of fruitless seeking lengthened to a week, then to two, Okada seemed to cast prudence to the winds. Reckless whether some acquaintance of his former life should see and recognize him, he began to ask outright at every conceivable place where she possibly might have gone, whether a young American girl had stayed there at any time during the past month. The persistent negative to his

questions not only baffled him but plainly wrought him to a pitch of extreme nervousness. At the end of the third week Kameda took mercy on his friend to be.

Kameda was glad he had waited. The non-appearance of Geraldine was easily explained—to his mind, which had a characteristic blind spot so far as the irresistible charms of his fellow Samurai were concerned. It was obvious to him that poor, stupid Geraldine had allowed herself to get caught by busybodies somewhere between Boston and Nagasaki. She was even now ignominiously fasting on bread and tears in Somerville, repenting for her unconsummated sin. The police, or the Y. W. C. A., or the Foreign Missionary League had nabbed her en route and sent her home. It would be just like an American girl, so smart in trifles, to blunder when it came to anything big, heroic, Japanese. Probably Geraldine had stayed between trains or boats at some hotel for travelling girls, and the kind matron had spanked her and sent her back to home and mother. It never even penetrated Kameda's national conceit that Geraldine might at last have awakened to nausea at the thought of marriage or its equivalent with one of his countrymen.

Reasonable as Kameda's theory was he did not share it with Okada. Long training in diplomacy had taught him that truth is too precious to be shared with anyone. So, like a doting hen mothering an addled egg, he cherished his supposed truth for his own delectation, and sympathetically offered Okada a substitute. He boldly called on Okada at the latter's inn and revealed himself as a brother Samurai.

Okada received the news warily, without a trace of having comprehended its significance. If Kameda was indeed a son of the Samurai, as he had just proclaimed himself in a hushed voice to be, Okada could afford to wait until he saw what his 'brother' wanted. The strict freemasonry of his cult, or caste, while compelling him to succour a brother in distress, did not direct him to go out of his way to ascertain what ailed his companion in glory. Kameda all but enlightened him suddenly, and without the slightest preparation for the shock.

"I have just come here from Boston," he remarked not too untruthfully.

Whether orientals can read each other's poker faces better than we is an open question. Okada seemed to give no evidence of internal trouble, and Kameda, if he perceived the Japanese equivalent of electrified surprise on his brother Samurai's face, carefully dissembled the knowledge on his own bland countenance.

"From Boston?" Okada repeated politely.

"From Boston," Kameda confirmed graciously, adding for his friend's benefit, "from Somerville also."

"Ah," Okada remarked. Only he did not say 'ah,' but a much less compromising grunt which only a Buddha-faced oriental knows how to produce. It was the epitome of complete, gentlemanly indifference.

"Miss Shortridge," Kameda continued like a little boy letting off firecrackers at the heels of a dignified senator, "sent me."

"Miss Shortridge?" Okada queried. "Is she a missionary?"

Kameda understood the game. If Okada did not care to trust him—and Kameda could scarcely blame his 'brother,' he was only too glad to offer proofs for his assertions.

"I think she is not a missionary," Kameda replied, permitting himself the relaxation of a smile. "She came to my office in Boston some weeks ago. I was Japanese consul there. She told me you were in Fuzan, or would be here shortly."

Okada followed politely, but without interest. What was this tiresome little man trying to tell him? His actions lied better than words.

"Yes?" he said.

"Miss Shortridge," Kameda continued gravely, "asked me if I would come to Fuzan to see you in her behalf. She had something very precious which she wished me to give you. As I was about to take a holiday in Japan I consented. It is not many hours by steamer from Nagasaki to Fuzan, and Miss Shortridge kindly gave me sufficient money to cover my extra travelling expenses. She seemed rich, so I did not refuse to accept what she forced on me. Her handbag was filled with American bills, many of them the black, hundred dollar denomination."

Okada thought it time to elucidate.

"Miss Shortridge," he explained for Kameda's doubtful benefit, "must be one of the American lady missionaries I met last year while travelling in Yeddo. She was lost among our people, not knowing the language very well, and I helped her to find her way. What did this lady wish you to bring me?"

"It was very precious, she said. And when I showed my surprise that such a thing as she mentioned could be as precious as she said it was, demanding that I make personally the long journey from Tokyo to Fuzan to deliver it to you, she assured me warmly that it was beyond price, and that you would understand perfectly."

"You have brought it?"

"Yes," Kameda asserted, narrowly watching his companion's slightest movements. Okada incautiously put out his hand to receive the gift.

"I am afraid it is not what you seem to have been expecting," Kameda said with regret, glancing at Okada's extended hand. "I trust you will not be disappointed."

"What did the lady send?"

"Her love," Kameda replied softly.

Okada bowed, but said nothing.

"Miss Shortridge said you would understand," Kameda added with a note of reproach in his voice.

Okada thought he did understand. Inwardly cursing that he had ever been fool enough to trust an American girl with anything more valuable than his own 'love,' he replied with dignity that Miss Shortridge was an estimable lady, but inclined to magnify trifles.

"I was merely polite to her," he explained, "as we Japanese are to foreigners—even to missionaries—in our own country. Miss Shortridge misunderstood. I fear I do not remember what she looked like. Is she a middle-aged lady?"

Okada's question was not merely an attempt to fill

his informant's eyes with sand. His theory was that Geraldine, proving unequal to her task of secrecy, had been caught red-handed, or rather yellow-handed, by Mrs. Shortridge, with all the bills he had sent for the girl's passage expenses, to say nothing of the tell-tale steamer ticket. She had therefore confessed all like a fool, been browbeaten into repentance, and locked up. What had the stupid fool done with his gold tooth? Had she told them about that too? He longed to get his hands about her throat and choke the life out of her. He would yet, if he came out alive from what lay ahead of him. Without the gold tooth the difficulty of his self appointed task for the honor of Japan was magnified a thousandfold, if not rendered sheerly impossible. Oh, what a fool he had been.

But had he been such a fool? In justice to himself he had to admit that his plan for concealing the precious gold tooth where no one would ever be likely to look for it, and where he himself could find it whenever he chose to call, was admirable at the time when he put it into action. What better could he have done? He was rather more than suspicious that Narumi, and therefore the Emperor, had at last suspected that the 'renegade' still lived. On more than one occasion he had felt, as he expressed it to himself, that he was being 'watched from a great distance.' The incident in the Boston Public Library but confirmed him in the suspicions which he had nursed for over a year. He knew exactly what his Emperor, at Narumi's instigation, desired to possess. What more natural then, or more prudent, than that he should use the young

American girl's silly fascination for himself as the means of hiding most effectively the priceless thing which the Emperor coveted for the glory—according to his mistaken modern ideals—of Japan?

What spy would ever guess that the gold tooth reposed in the sentimental head of a young American girl? If Okada himself died before he could execute the greater task he had set himself, the spies should at least not give their modernized master an easy victory. They should not find what the Emperor desired by the simple police device of minutely searching a dead man's effects. The tooth would be buried with Geraldine in her grave, or be cast into a dentist's scrap gold to be melted down and dissipated in a hundred crowns or fillings which in their turn certainly would be buried irretrievably, and no one would ever suspect what treasure it was that the silent earth covered. In time science or exploration might remedy the loss, but it should not, within his generation at least, Okada felt, if he succeeded in the main task to which the gold tooth was the key.

So he had not erred in his plan for concealment. A girl's stupidity, for which he was not to blame, had undone part of his work, rendering the rest more difficult. If Geraldine held her tongue about the tooth the imperial spies still should never profit by his foolish confidence. But if she confessed the episode to her mother, or to anyone else, it would not be long till the unscrupulous ingenuity of the Japanese secret police put the Emperor in possession of what he craved,

and Japan would sink at once and forever to the crude level of occidental commercialized 'civilization.'

As he sat calmly facing the ex-consul, Okada was thinking furiously. Should he proceed at once, as he had planned, to the north to finish his work, or should he boldly risk arrest and possibly death to return to Boston and recover the gold tooth? So long as Geraldine had it in her possession there was the constant risk of her weak-kneed confession. On the other hand she might hold her tongue on that matter for life, out of a feeling of shame, or from the remnant of her loyalty to himself. For Okada, blinded by his national conceit, still believed that Geraldine did love him. Kameda's message, 'she sent you her love,' rang true. The silly, sentimental girl actually believed that he had loved her, and that the assurance of her constancy to him was all that he desired, for the present at least, while distance and an angry mother separated them, to make him supremely happy in far Fuzan. Tish! Japanese women were dolls, fools, over-sexed nuisances, but these American girls were something unspeakable. Should he risk death to recover his tooth now, or would it be wiser to defer that hazardous adventure and his revenge until he had triumphed or failed miserably in the mountains of the north? It was a difficult choice. Kameda tipped the decision.

"Miss Shortridge," he said in answer to Okada's question, "is a very young woman. I should judge she is not yet twenty."

Okada looked puzzled.

"I do not remember a young woman among the ladies I helped. There may have been one. I have forgotten."

"Mrs. Shortridge," Kameda continued, "is middle-aged."

"You have seen her?"

"Frequently." Kameda sprung another of his surprises. "A Japanese by the same name as yours disappeared suddenly from the Shortridge house. Mrs. Shortridge called on me to see if I could find this man 'Okada.' He had lived with them for about three years, as a designer in Mr. Shortridge's jewelry factory. Some weeks after Mrs. Shortridge's first call, the young Miss Shortridge visited my office, to say that she knew that their Mr. Okada was in Cho-sen. Evidently I have not found the right Mr. Okada. The name is quite common."

"I regret that your search has been fruitless," Okada said politely. "Have you asked at the other inns and hotels?"

"Without result," Kameda replied, quite untruthfully.

"Why did this man Okada leave the Shortridge house in Boston?" Okada asked with a show of polite interest.

"In Somerville," Kameda corrected. "Somerville is very near Boston, where I was consul. This Okada left the house because Mrs. Shortridge suspected her daughter of being in love with him. I believe from what the girl told me that her mother asked Okada

to leave before the good Americans of Somerville did him an injury."

To Okada this seemed perfectly reasonable. It was just what Geraldine would tell the consul when she entreated him to seek out Okada in Fuzan and assure him of her undying love for him. What a fool the girl was. Incidentally Okada noted that he was not suspected of any more serious crime, as he well might have been after so precipitate a departure. He could return to Boston any time he chose, and wring Geraldine's neck, if he still wished to do so after recovering his property, in perfect security.

"It is a touching story," he commented, "not unlike many in our older classics."

"Youth is ever the same," Kameda agreed sententiously.

"You are no longer consul in Boston?" Okada asked.

"The Emperor has relieved me."

"You will return to America perhaps?"

"No," Kameda replied slowly. "The Emperor has commanded me to go elsewhere. But first let me explain why I am here. When the Boston papers printed the announcement that I was to be recalled to Japan, Miss Shortridge came to my office. She begged me to carry the message which I have just delivered to the wrong Mr. Okada."

A new truth was beginning to dawn on Mr. Okada's native conceit. At first he had supposed it must have been Geraldine's mother who had a handbag full of

the yellow bills which he had sent Geraldine, and he had suspected Kameda of pocketing these same bills, no doubt entrusted to him by the indignant and shamed mother to be returned without thanks to their yellow sender. Knowing what he did of the whole transaction, he had of course to pocket his loss, and let this meek-faced little man get away with the cash for which he had sweated at least four months in Shortridge's factory. He knew his countrymen well enough to believe that not many of them would let slip so soft a chance of making a little honest money. But now it was obvious that unless the ex-consul was a far shrewder thief than Okada suspected him of being, he must be telling the truth. Geraldine had indeed sent him her love, but more in irony than in maidenly affection. She had done him properly. All she wanted was the money he sent. He could have sworn when he left her that she was his and would be true to him. Absence, and the sudden acquisition of what to her was wealth, with possibly a new sweetheart thrown in, had turned her head in another direction. Like all of her commercialized people, Okada reflected contemptuously, she was for sale. All she wanted was money. Immediately he conceived a higher regard for the womanhood of his own country, especially for the daughters of the Samurai who were as old-fashioned in their loyalty as their fathers. And rather unwarrantably he assumed that little Kameda was not so dishonest as he had at first suspected him of being.

All of which goes to show that reason in human

affairs is about as treacherous a guide as any that can be followed.

Kameda's success in diplomacy thus far emboldened him to proceed at once to the main tissue of lies. His future policy would be guided by Okada's reception of these preliminary overtures.

"You seemed interested to know," he began, "whether I shall return to America. I shall not. The Emperor has assigned me to a more important task than even the discharge of the duties of an ambassador."

The importance which Kameda desired this somewhat pompous statement to have, produced the desired effect. At least, so far as he could judge, Okada was impressed by the fact that he was face to face with a fellow countryman who might, had he so chosen, have been appointed ambassador to the United States.

"My present assignment," Kameda continued, "grew directly out of my work as consul in Boston. Through his agents, the Emperor learned that the American capitalists are planning to exploit the mines in northern Korea, My duty is to prevent the American mining interests from obtaining a foothold in the richly mineralized mountains to the north of this country. It is we, the Japanese, who have opened Korea to the civilized world, and it is for us to use our good influence in the disposal of her riches. Shall Cho-sen be robbed of her heritage?"

He paused with dramatic effect to note the expression in Okada's eyes. Okada shook his head. So far

at least as he was concerned, Korea should not be robbed, either by the United States of America or by the Tanabes who pilfered valuable historical documents from her ancient monasteries, or by modernized Sons of Heaven who would make of their aristocratic people a nation of swindling merchants and swashbuckling braggarts. Okada was sure of himself. He was not yet certain of his brother Samurai. Was this ex-consul of the true fold, or was he an imperialistic wolf in sheep's clothing?

"Cho-sen shall not be robbed," Okada answered quietly, and with a somewhat sinister double meaning. Lie for lie he could hold his own with any man.

"We, the Samurai shall protect her!" Kameda exclaimed, seeking to strike a responsive spark from his opponent's steel. But Okada was not ready to commit himself, however guardedly, and Kameda was forced to continue his history.

"The Emperor has entrusted to me the task of preventing the Americans from obtaining any mining concessions in northern Korea. Cho-sen shall not be plundered. I have sworn the oath of a Samurai to protect her against the aggression of western robbers."

"I too," Okada admitted with dignity.

Kameda thought he had drawn fire. Had he? Which of these two fencers was the keener? It remained to be seen. For the moment Kameda simulated intense, glad surprise.

"You too?" he exclaimed. "Are you of the Emperor's sons on this dangerous mission?"

"I am," Okada asserted. "Like you, I work for the glory of Japan."

"The Emperor has commissioned you to balk the Americans?"

"It was not necessary. We Sons of the Samurai work always for our Master, whether or not he bids us."

"But you too are interested in the American aggressions in Cho-sen?"

Okada nodded gravely.

"By profession I am a mining engineer. I have just come down from the north. Everywhere on the Manchurian border, in the villages, in the monasteries, I heard word of the Americans. Their engineers, disguised as explorers, geologists, botanists, paleontologists, what you will, are spying out the richness of the unsurveyed mountains. They make maps, they take specimens 'for scientific purposes,' 'for museums'—for any lie, and go back to America to report that the Koreans are ignorant and will part with their rights for a song, as the American engineers say. They hold nothing sacred. Even now they are trying to purchase an ancient cemetery where the monks of one of those mountain monasteries have buried their dead for two thousand years or more. Why? Because the rocks under the cemetery are heavily mineralized. They will exhume those holy bones for a handful of gold."

Okada spoke with a heat which was not wholly simulated. To him the traditions of an ancient people were sacred and their respect for their dead inviolable.

He was indeed of the older school. But he was fulminating not against the American promoters whom he had invented on the spur of the moment for Kameda's benefit, but against his own rapacious countrymen who, he imagined, might easily do all that he had attributed to the Americans should they suspect the existence of gold in the uncharted mountains.

"Is it not shameful?" Kameda agreed. "Would we treat a helpless people so?"

"The true sons of the Samurai would not," Okada asserted with quiet conviction.

"We who serve the Son of Heaven shall never betray him," Kameda responded as if he were in church.

"Never," Okada echoed.

And that was all Kameda could get out of him for the moment. The truth was that Okada was beginning to suspect the ex-consul of playing a very deep game, whose precise nature he could not fathom. For the moment he dismissed as improbable the hypothesis that the Emperor had sent Kameda after him as a shadow. Either the Emperor would have chosen a more astute spy, one who would not acknowledge his connection with the imperial government after an hour's acquaintance, or Kameda, who seemed fairly intelligent, if indeed a spy, would have moved less clumsily on his quarry. Not believing that Kameda was an agent of the Emperor's to trace him, Okada inferred that the ex-consul could have no knowledge of what his own purpose was in Cho-sen. What then was Kameda up to? Had he somehow learned from the Shortridges facts which had given him a vague idea that their

missing Japanese was a man worth following? What could those facts be? With a shock Okada remembered the precious rolls he had abandoned in the urgency and excitement of his flight from Somerville. As certainly as if he had been told by Kameda himself he felt that this insignificant man in his capacity of Japanese consul had been shown those rolls as part of a missing man's property. Had Kameda been able to read enough of them to give him a reasonable clue? He dared not inquire directly, because he had already been forced to deny that he was the Okada of Geraldine Shortridge's affection. He must move with extreme caution to ascertain exactly how much this man knew of what he was bungling into.

This was by no means the first time that Okada had thought of the rolls which he had no opportunity to destroy, on that fatal night of the 'accident,' and which it would have been impossible for him to carry with him on his flight, even if he had remembered them when he left Geraldine to faint in his study. So far he had comforted himself with the assurance that if old Tanabe could only blunder through them literally, any chance American scholar or less gifted Japanese philologist who stumbled across them would be no more successful in divining their hidden treasures. He had even hoped that the rolls would be turned over by the Shortridges to the Boston museum, to rot there uselessly as quaint works of art for centuries. That they should ever fall into the hands of some man capable of perceiving, however dimly, their inestimable importance, was a sickening possibility which, until

this instant, he had lacked the courage to face like a Samurai.

Suddenly he regained his composure. He became cool and collected, his mind as keen as a razor. He would face this man down if necessary and, if his vague suspicions were confirmed, eliminate him. What did it matter who should read those rolls now that he, Okada, was on his way to the final mission? He hoped to be completely successful, to render for this age at least the practical application of their curious lore a physical impossibility. Those ancient metallurgists, the original inspirers of the rolls, had blundered onto one of nature's profoundest secrets. By a species of accident they had accumulated the means of making a mystery, which they could not have understood, a practical success. He, Okada the Samurai, would obliterate their hoarded secret and save his country's soul.

The immediate question was, how much did Kameda know? And who was he?

"You must excuse me," he said, rising and bowing. "I have an engagement with an engineer from the north in a few minutes. Shall we continue our conversation to-morrow?"

"With pleasure," Kameda agreed, bowing. "Shall I meet you here?"

"Let us say to-morrow morning at ten o'clock."

CHAPTER XII

A RACE

DINOSAUR was having the time of his life. Although he was unaware of her assistance, Geraldine had proved an invaluable ally in his race against time. Her failure to appear in Fuzan had kept Okada dallying long after the date on which he had originally planned to strike out for the northern mountains. The early break-up of the ice at Vladivostok too had favored Blye, and he had made the journey to Harbin in record time. There, in care of the American consul, he found his twenty thousand dollars ready for instant use. Blessing the Secretary, he enlisted the services of every white man at the consulate, and noised it far and wide that he must reach the southern border of Manchuria in 'ten seconds flat.' Why? Dinosaur explained that two rival expeditions, one French, one British, green with envy at the great egg-hunting successes of the Americans, were racing even then to the ancient dinosaur deposits to plunder them of their last egg shell. With this sporting proposition before their eyes the attachés worked themselves stiff, and within forty-eight hours were cheering Blye's egg-hunters out of Harbin.

They had done their best for him. From horses to

camp kitchen the caravan was perfect, with the possible exception of the interpreter, a man who called himself Ivanoff, and who looked like a half-breed Chinese. What the other half of him may have been only Heaven and possibly his mother knew. Be that as it may, the shifty-eyed Ivanoff protested first that he was no Bolshevik; second that he knew Korean in all its dialects as well as he knew his native tongue, whatever that was; and third that he was personally acquainted with the leader of the French egg expedition and would sell his priceless services to that great paleontologist unless Blye engaged him on the spot. For lack of something with a steadier pair of eyes in its head, Blye took him on. With his precious Japanese and other geological maps tucked snugly into his waterproof saddle bags, and the interesting reprint of the old Jesuit *De re metallica* reposing in his inner oilskin pocket, he dug his heels into his shaggy stallion and headed the caravan due southeast. He was off, in search of he knew not precisely what, only that it might prove, if found, to be the world's desire.

Chief among his numerous boxes was a heavy one, closely nailed up from prying eyes, which he had brought with him from Vladivostok to Harbin. He stayed in Vladivostok only long enough to make this purchase. To the curious Russian Jew who sold the article to him second hand, and who seemed in pain to guess what his customer could want with it, Dinosaur stated that he was on his way to Kamkatcha to shoot whales.

Kameda in the meantime was having a peck of trouble. When Okada made that appointment with him for 'ten o'clock to-morrow morning' he half suspected his valuable friend of meaning to-morrow in the Spanish sense of never. So when he left Okada's lodging, he loitered to see which way Okada should go when he emerged to keep his appointment with the 'mining engineer.'

Okada thoughtfully walked out by a back door the moment his friend was off the premises. He did not look back, but kept on, as straight as possible through the narrow streets, until he had left the town well behind him. Then he took a shortcut across a field to the nearest village, a suburb of Fuzan, which happened to be the first stop for trains on the Fuzan-Seoul railway after leaving the former port. He had to wait three hours for a train, but he did not mind.

The next morning at ten o'clock he also was packed up and on his way. Unlike Blye's, Okada's caravan was extremely light. It consisted of but himself and his personal baggage, the most of which was one fifty-pound box of chemicals, the whole conveniently fitted with shoulder straps, such as mountain packers use when carrying heavy loads up steep grades. Okada knew where he was going, although he had never seen the place. His first main stop was to be at a distant monastery in the northern mountains. So long as it was possible he would travel like a gentleman by train, pony, jinricksha, or sedan. Thereafter he would trust to the strength of his own legs and those of such other adventurers as could be persuaded by money to

carry his box until he sent them home. After that he would do it alone.

When Kameda realized after half an hour of loitering that Okada had given him the slip, he became quite peevish. He realized at once that to call 'tomorrow morning' at ten o'clock would only make him feel more of a fool than he did already. Having verified his suspicion that Okada was not in his lodging, and therefore not likely to return, he hastened to the cable office and did a very sensible thing. He wrote out a long message in the diplomatic cipher to be transmitted immediately to the Son of Heaven.

Whatever Kameda's true game was, his cablegram certainly had the desired effect on the Emperor. It was by no means the first he had received from his faithful servant, the ex-consul, but it was one of the most interesting. He was informed that Kameda had all but gained Okada's confidence only to lose it bodily by the vanishing of Okada, confidence and all. In short he was as bewildered as a bloodhound that has just had its nose smeared with limburger cheese.

The Emperor, for his part, showed commendable efficiency. Whatever his ulterior motives may have been, it was no part of the game that Okada should be mistreated in any way, much less apprehended and deported to Boston to stand trial for murder. Okada was a Samurai, and therefore more or less indifferent to such tortures as can be decently inflicted by a civilized people. To capture and question him about his secret would be equivalent to killing the golden goose. He must be followed to the very source of his mys-

terious knowledge. There he could be interrogated quite decently by the eminently civilized method of friendly betrayal. Should he prove too clever to make a friend of any man, then that man must resort to his wits, spy out what he could, and work always for the glory of Japan.

The Emperor was well aware that there existed two opposing doctrines regarding Japan's true glory. The true 'Sons of the Samurai' had few secrets from their feudal 'father' as to their real opinions. For one thing, many of them were bitterly outspoken. More than one had politely berated the Son of Heaven when the Diet met behind locked doors to 'vote,' that is command, millions for battleships while the factory employees were rioting for rice. Nevertheless, although he knew that the old nobility were divided among themselves, the daring father of them all trusted his own ability to pick a true man who would not, in thieves' parlance, put the double cross on him. Narumi no doubt had sufficiently pondered Okada's case to have arrived at a correct estimate of his former student's ideals for Japan. Long before this he had discussed it thoroughly with the Emperor, as one modernist with another. And it is only reasonable to infer that they reached the conclusion, when finally Okada's trail was picked up in Boston, that the proper man to follow the trail must be to all outward appearances a true, dyed-in-the-hide 'Son of the Samurai' of the most rabidly conservative type imaginable, and that he must be at heart as flaming a modernist as themselves. The difficulty was to put their fingers on so perfect a Judas.

When the very first of Kameda's long cipher cablegrams from Boston reached Japan, going into all details of the murdered agent's death and, what was much more important, informing the Emperor that a young American geologist, Blye, who had travelled extensively in Asia, evidently suspected something that it might be important for the Japanese nation to learn, the Emperor decided instantly to try out this prospective betrayer. In sending Mr. Doi to Boston to investigate, he had instructed that young man to treat Kameda with the utmost incivility and under no circumstances to take him into his confidence on any matter whatever. Doi, of course, carried out his instructions admirably. They were just the kind a young man of his rather overbearing nature would relish. The Emperor's not unsagacious theory was that any man who would stand the treatment he had received at Mr. Doi's hands for a few weeks, and ask for more at the end, must be fairly loyal.

When the last of Kameda's long Boston ciphers was decoded, Narumi agreed with his master that they had found their man. The romantic cablegram recalling the consul to Japan was sent at once as requested, in order that it might be exhibited to the young geologist Blye who, with his maps and other guesses, appeared to be getting dangerously close to the truth, whatever might be its nature.

In the covering cipher message accompanying this frank order, the Emperor delivered himself of the advice which Kameda had craved. Kameda in his last

Boston message had delicately hinted that Mr. Doi's mission was a failure. He asked therefore as a special grace that he be allowed to lay down his life if need be in the service of the master to repair Mr. Doi's 'error.' There was an American young lady, he asserted, who would reveal Okada's refuge to him but to no other. Should he follow this young lady's directions? Or would it be wiser to follow Blye, who seemed to think he knew what he was doing? After long and anxious deliberation the Emperor and Narumi decided in favor of Geraldine versus Dinosaur.

Narumi and the Emperor might have formed a different estimate of Kameda's integrity could they have known that Geraldine's departure for some place unnamed had inspired the consul's last cablegram. She was gone, vanished like the wind, even while Kameda was promising in cipher to pump her as to Okada's hiding place. The falsehood, however, was merely technical. Kameda felt from his examination of her mail that she had as good as told him where she was going, and that Okada would meet her when she arrived. What did it matter if, to save costly explanations by cipher, he put the event of questioning the young lady in the future instead of in the past where it properly belonged?

It was but natural after all that had passed between them that the Emperor should cable immediately to Kameda in Fuzan a carte-blanche permission, to be shown to all employees of the imperial government,

which would enable the ex-consul to command their police and other services as if he were the Mikado himself.

Armed with this powerful document, mightier than a field battery in its effect on all who chanced to read it, Kameda took up his search for the elusive Okada shortly before ten o'clock on the "to-morrow" morning when he and his brother Samurai should have been continuing their chat. Within forty-eight hours the entire Japanized part of the Korean peninsula was one vast net to snare the fleeing man. He was not to be detained or otherwise molested when found. They were merely to keep their eyes on him till Kameda could catch up to finish that interesting conversation.

The government police had little difficulty in picking up the trail of the distinguished looking 'mining engineer' as he sped north by rail and road. Kameda received word to overtake his friend at Anshu in the North, where the river Seiseu invites the adventurous to follow its muddy waters farther north and slightly east, to the jumbled mountains barring the way to Manchuria. Okada was preparing to follow the river to its source. Thanks to the spurt of efficiency produced by the Emperor's cablegram, Kameda was enabled to chat things over with Okada before the latter left his hotel in Anshu.

If Okada was surprised when his Samurai brother walked in on him, he managed to conceal his emotions. With a grave apology for having broken his ten o'clock engagement, he resumed diplomatic relations as if nothing had happened. A telegram from

the North, he asserted, was the reason for his discourteous departure from Fuzan. Kameda accepted the apology as one gentleman takes a lie from another, without undue comment. He expressed his joy that business had thrown them together once more. Had Okada supped? No? Well then, he would be honoring Kameda if he considered himself the latter's guest at dinner. If you must work with or against a man it is much pleasanter to do what must be done decently.

"As I told you in Fuzan," Kameda reminded him, "the Emperor has sent me on this mission to the North to prevent the American capitalists from gaining a foothold in Cho-sen and exploiting her people."

"Have you any definite plans?" Okada inquired politely.

"In a way they are definite," Kameda replied slowly. He was feeling his way slowly along the clue with which Okada had supplied him in Fuzan, when he denounced the American engineers for prospecting in the grounds of the mountain monasteries. Of course no such engineers ever existed. Okada had invented them to cover his own movements 'for the glory of Japan.'

"How definite?" Okada asked pointedly.

"As definite as yours, I imagine," Kameda retorted with a smile. "Are we not both working for one master to the same end? You would prevent foreign robberies in Cho-sen. So would I. You are a mining engineer acquainted with the North. I am but an amateur with a deeper knowledge of human nature than of mines. Could we not work together?"

"I see no objection," Okada agreed with apparent pleasure. "It is pleasanter when travellers share the same road."

Kameda was rather taken aback. His victory seemed too easy to be quite genuine. For a moment he had a vision, conjured up from what he heard in the Cambridge police station, of a tall figure violently shoving a short man in front of an automobile going at twenty-five miles an hour. There were no automobiles on the mountain roads of Northern Korea, he reflected, but without much satisfaction. The roads are too narrow. But there are plenty of precipices. The ex-consul made a mental resolution to walk behind Okada when they came to the really steep places, and to travel only in broad daylight.

"It will indeed be pleasant," he murmured. "Your plans are possibly more definite than mine?"

"I cannot say," Okada confessed, "until I have heard yours."

"Oh, mine," Kameda laughed, "are really quite nebulous. You see," he continued with a well calculated burst of confidence, "I am following a particular man. My difficulty is that I do not know exactly where that man is going."

"Who is the man?" Okada asked with deadly, quiet directness.

"A young American, James Blye."

"A mining engineer?"

"I believe so, although he calls himself a geologist."

"He is employed by one of the big American mining corporations?"

"Not openly," Kameda replied. "He is a collector of fossils for a Boston Museum. I am convinced however that Blye's fossil hunting is only a disguise. He is on a survey to locate rich goldfields in the north and to cheat the ignorant monks and other holders out of their unsuspected wealth. The Emperor too feels sure of this."

"Why?" Okada demanded.

"Because," Kameda declared boldly, "I told him so."

"And why do you suspect this James Blye of being what you say he is?"

"If I told you everything, it would make a long story. Let me cut it short. Mr. Blye has travelled much in Asia. Naturally he sought my acquaintance, to talk over the countries he had visited, when he found himself compelled to winter in Cambridge—near Boston. We became very friendly. Blye took me into his confidence. The Geological Museum, he said, was about to send him on an expedition to Manchuria to hunt for certain rare fossils. One day I found him poring over a Japanese map of the mountains to the north of Cho-sen. I asked him if the Museum had changed its mind. He laughed, and said that Korea is only a little way from Southern Manchuria, in fact 'next door to it.' So why not see the Land of the Morning Calm while he had the opportunity?

"I studied the map with him and remarked that the region he was planning to visit is practically unknown, even to our geographers. He agreed that it must be so, as the geology of the map was very wild. On pressing him I learned his opinion that such a region

must be extremely rich in gold and valuable minerals. Was he going on a prospecting trip while in the mountains? He refused to say yes or no, but laughed at me, and said he expected to bring back 'something of great value.' For his employers?, I asked, and he nodded.

"Now," Kameda concluded, "would you, as a mining engineer, have warned the Emperor?"

"At once," Okada asserted. "You did right. This man Blye will enter Cho-sen from the north?"

"I do not know. At first he told me the Museum was sending him to Manchuria to hunt for fossils. Then, later, he said they might send him to Cho-sen."

"You think," Okada suggested, "he has entered Cho-sen?"

Kameda avoided the trap. Obviously he would not be looking for Blye in Korea if the fossil hunter were in Manchuria.

"I think it is more probable. That is why I came north from Fuzan, instead of working south from Manchuria."

Okada considered in silence for some moments.

"You recall whose map Blye was using?"

"Of course," Kameda admitted readily. "I noted exactly what map it was, and sent to Tokyo for a duplicate." He reached into his pocket. "Here it is. Would you care to see it?"

Without a word Okada spread out the map on the table and bent over it in close study. The 'crazy geology' of the jumbled mountain ranges, and the inaccessible plateau which had engaged Blye's atten-

tion, seemed to fascinate the Japanese chemist. When he had followed Korean exploration in the reports of his compatriots, the region depicted on the map was considered inaccessible, and was wholly unknown. Okada knew enough about geology to grasp at once the extraordinary roughness of the country. Like Blye he wondered how the geographer had reached the top of the plateau to record the numerous glacial lakes which he had indicated. Could it be possible that this traveller had actually explored the plateau? If so he had deliberately suppressed on his map the contours by which he had made the ascent. As drawn on the map, the top of the plateau was sheerly inaccessible, being bounded by precipices without a break.

A further circumstance caught Okada's attention. The legend of the map indicated a volcanic origin for the entire region except certain of the vast intrusions of archean rock which enclosed the plateau in a gigantic amphitheatre. It at once occurred to him, as it had not to Blye, that the explorer must have ascended one of the surrounding peaks to make his 'map' of the plateau. What this romantic geographer must have palmed off as accurate science was merely the hazy view of a part of the plateau, seen from a neighboring height, through the mountain mists. He had caught only glimpses of turquoise water and of a sheer wall of rock. These he had fused in imagination into the so-called scientific map for which the Emperor had decorated him.

"You find it interesting?" Kameda ventured after half an hour of absorbed silence on Okada's part.

"It is interesting. This man Blye must have some intelligence."

"He is not so stupid as most Americans," Kameda admitted. "What makes you think so."

"This is just the sort of place," Okada explained, pointing to the map, "where a mining engineer would look for what Americans call the 'mother lode.' The man you are trying to follow knows what he is doing. Manchuria and Northern Cho-sen are one of the richest gold bearing regions in Asia—in the whole world. The Manchurians and Chinese have been washing out millions of taels of gold in this district for four or five thousand years, and all with the crudest appliances. If a Chinese can evade his government, which does not permit private mining of gold, he can wash out a fortune in one spring in southern Manchuria. Where does all this inexhaustible supply of gold come from? There must be some common source from which the rivers wash down what has been loosened by heat and frost. Somewhere in these mountains the 'mother lode' is slowly crumbling to pieces, making all the sands of the rivers golden. Your man Blye thinks he has found the way to the 'mother lode.'"

"And America will get the concession for mining it," Kameda suggested softly.

"Why not Japan?" Okada countered.

"Would the Sons of the Samurai wish her to have it?"

"Some would not," Okada admitted. "But they are not the modern Japanese."

"Still," Kameda demurred, "would it not be better

that we, who dominate Asia, should have this wealth instead of letting it fall into the hands of our enemies?"

"If they are our enemies, yes. I speak as an old Samurai might speak. To such a man it would not seem good that Japan should become western. And if she gets too much gold, she is westernized overnight. So say the conservative Samurai. I myself am a modernist," Okada concluded quietly.

"But not an extremist," Kameda added. "You would not desecrate the traditions of the Koreans to get this gold? I think you would dig elsewhere if the gold lay under a temple or a monument to an ancestor."

"Of course," Okada agreed. "But it is not so with the Americans."

"Then we must prevent them from gaining the concessions."

"Yes, our Emperor will see that Cho-sen is not violated. For this gold, which is now useless to her and a temptation to foreigners, we will protect Cho-sen from the Europeans and the Americans. We understand her. They do not. They seek only to plunder."

"You will help me to outwit this Blye?" Kameda asked.

"Willingly. We are both working to one end."

"What if he finds the 'mother lode,' as you call it, first? Then his employers will start a war on some pretext so that they may seize the goldfields."

"He need not get there first," Okada replied quietly. "We shall find a shorter way."

"But if we find him there when we arrive, what then?" Kameda persisted.

Okada pointed to the map.

"These mountains have many precipices."

"You will take a strong expedition?"

"No. On this trip I am prospecting alone, unless you decide to come with me."

"I have decided," Kameda declared, confident that he could take care of himself if they did all their travelling by daylight.

He knew too much about Okada to feel altogether happy. Why had this reserved man agreed so readily to let a stranger accompany him on his secret mission? There could be but one answer. Okada intended that Kameda should never return to Japan to tell the Emperor what they found. The remark, 'these mountains have many precipices' was a veiled threat, and a clear warning to Kameda that if he valued his neck he had better turn back at once. So Kameda thought in his diplomatic way.

On one essential detail he was totally wrong. Okada had not the slightest intention of throwing him over a precipice. Something much more spectacular was in store for the Emperor's spy if Okada's plans matured as he intended. And this young American geologist Blye would also be invited to witness the same spectacle provided he could be caught without too much trouble.

Okada's new found 'brother' had given him an invaluable hint. This young geologist Blye must be a

man of parts. Apparently he was going directly to the heart of the matter, without perhaps knowing what he should find when he got there. Okada wondered curiously whether Blye would have brains and knowledge enough to recognize the main thing if he should see it. Few men could. Would Blye be content with a few hundredweight of gold washed from the rich sands of the rivers? If so he was no more intelligent than a thieving Chinese. If on the other hand this American geologist was not deceived by the obviousness of what he saw, where had he learned to see better? Again Okada was haunted by the suspicion that the innocent looking Kameda had guessed more than a little from those ancient Korean rolls. Had he shared his knowledge with Blye? It was possible. In that event, Blye would be racing to the prize while Kameda did his best to impede the progress of Blye's competitor. Well, Okada reflected, he had little cause for anxiety provided he and Kameda reached the proper place before Blye had left it.

In any case the privilege of seeing Kameda's duplicate of Blye's map was sure to save him no end of tramping through the mountains. He could now go straight to the right spot, after having interviewed old Tanabe's monastic friends, and without doubt would beat Blye by a safe margin. Without this signpost he might have wandered through the passes for years looking for the likely spot and not finding a vestige of it. Tanabe's friends could not have helped him; they were as ignorant as the venerable archaeolo-

gist was himself. Okada hoped, however, that they might still have among their treasures another gold tooth.

In the meantime Blye was rapidly approaching the mountain ranges of northern Cho-sen. He had turned aside twice in the Manchurian waste to plunder rich deposits of dinosaur eggs, whose existence he had suspected on a previous expedition; otherwise he might even now have been verifying the Japanese geographer's romantic map. But he felt that duty to his employers demanded that he first pacify their hunger for stone eggs before attending to his personal pleasures. As a wise precaution against possible breakages in the mountains he had crated up all but two of the eggs and sent them back to Harbin with the half of his convoy, to be shipped at once to Boston, and being a prudent young man he wisely shipped two eggs to himself at Cambridge.

The thought of how pleased the old gentlemen in Boston would be when the crates were unpacked gave him a warm glow for his own anticipated pleasure. Before he began the proper business of the expedition he would send back the rest of his caravan with the exception of the shifty-eyed, indispensable Ivanoff. The man so far had proven reliable and harmless. Blye trusted that his crooked look was the result of eye strain rather than of an over-stretched conscience.

CHAPTER XIII

THIEVES

The brother Samurai, Kameda and Okada, had long since left the travelled roads. Indeed for almost a week they had lost sight of the guiding river, and had followed bypaths through the upland valleys and over the rolling foothills to quaint old villages where the modern spirit had not yet penetrated. The unsophisticated villagers received them kindly everywhere, unaware that their courteous guests should, theoretically, be hated as the oppressors of a helpless people. The Japanese have not oppressed the Koreans: they have merely tried to accustom their wards to western ways, so that when the deluge breaks over Cho-sen the inhabitants shall be prepared for the worst. Although the 'usurpers' have been good for Cho-sen, it is the fashion in certain quarters to speak only evil of them. The lonely travellers in the remote hills, where progress has not yet deposited its unclean mildew, found none of this spirit. Everywhere they were as welcome as the late spring, and for a week at least forgot their duplicity in the calm joy of living close to the earth.

They almost became friends. Officially, of course, they were friends, but an armed neutrality is rather

a different thing from unarmed confidence. Their mutual love of natural beauty all but drew them together in the bonds of a true philosophy of life. But like most human beings they were the helpless victims of all they had ever learned from other human beings as stupidly blind as themselves. More than once Okada glanced up from the deep blue irises, just now bursting into bloom by every waterway, to his friend's face with a hesitant regret on his own.

Kameda too held back, although he almost yielded once when they skirted a tiny meadow of low growing, bright yellow azaleas no taller than creeping pansies. All this, and the long quiet of a peaceful life was theirs for the taking in any of the friendly villages through which they hurried. Why did he not seize this joy when it was what he most desired? Once he all but asked Okada that very question, but held back, because his companion was a man to be watched, not befriended.

Okada knew exactly where he was going and why. Kameda was content to follow. The leader declared that he must call on some old friends at one of the lonely mountain monasteries. They were not exactly his own friends, he explained, but friends of a very dear friend of his, who had asked him to drop in and leave greetings for the sake of old times. It would not take them far out of their way, Okada promised, and the rest would do them good before the real climbing began.

Kameda agreed. For some days he had been wondering what they should do for food when they passed

the last tiny farm house. They walked alone, Okada having refused a bearer to carry his heavy pack which, he said, contained a prospecting outfit. Okada had not overlooked this detail. For obvious reasons he did not wish to take any lowlander along as porter. The stupidest hillsman, who would be incapable ever of finding his way out of the mountains to Seoul or any of the seaport towns, would make an ideal beast of burden. As for food, it could be bought at the last village.

It was evening when they reached the quaint old monastery perched like a toy house on its precarious cliffs. A long, winding stone stairway led from the base of the rocks up to the sacred gate, and dark green cypresses, a thousand years old, slanted their level branches far out over the cliffs. As a prudent precaution Okada left his heavy pack at the foot of the long stone stairway, and the two friends mounted slowly to the monastery.

The old monks lived in their cypress garden when the weather was mild, caring for their flowers and vegetables which they reared in the rich soil carried up the long stairs in baskets by generation after generation of holy men. Their garden was not large, but choice. A plant must prove its worth to be permitted to live under the shadow of those red tiled buildings. Stragglers, unfaithful bloomers and weaklings were rooted up and pitched over the cliff. Had the gentle old man with the sparse white beard who welcomed the travellers treated them as weeds, instead of inviting them as he did to share his supper, he undoubtedly would have slept sounder the following night.

Okada looked about him. This was the right place. The scarlet lacquer of the entrance hall, and the two stone turtles of curious design guarding the farther door, were exactly as Tanabe had described them. Nothing had been changed since the venerable antiquarian's visit over fourteen years before. The same gold and vivid green embroideries decorated the eastern wall, the same priceless picture in brilliant colors, apparently by some Chinese artist of long ago, adorned the western in artistic solitude.

The picture represented a wild mountain scene, bristling with crags and pinnacles of sunlit rock against a stark blue sky. A bewildering maze of deep, narrow passes through forbidding masses of heavily mineralized cliffs of all the colors of the spectrum, all in a perspective stranger than that of Chinese art, seemed to reveal all sides of those amazing mountains at once.

The impression produced on Okada by this work of art was as eerie as the picture itself. At first he thought 'it is impossible, especially the colors.' Then, the longer he gazed at it, fascinated, the more natural and inevitable it became. That maze of narrow defiles and those contradictory crags were held together in one whole by the inevitable logic of nature. The place, wherever it might be, existed; it was not the idle sport of a too fantastic imagination. The colors of the rocks could not have been imagined, they must have been seen. No artist would have had the boldness to combine chromatic discords like those. And yet the whole effect was not only inspiring, but beautiful and serene.

"Where is that place?" Okada asked their aged host.

The old man, no other than the abbot himself, peered at the picture with eyes which cataracts had long since dimmed. He shook his head.

"We do not know."

"Where did you get the picture?"

"We have always had it," the old man answered simply, as if that explanation should suffice the most curious. "You are not a Korean?" he asked, detecting the foreign quality of Okada's accent.

"I am from the South," Okada replied. "Your accent is softer up here than it is with us."

"I thought you were a Japanese," the old man replied doubtfully.

Kameda wisely kept silence. His tongue would have betrayed them instantly.

"Naturally enough," Okada said indifferently. "We do much trading nowadays in Cho-sen with the oppressors. It is impossible not to become contaminated by their speech."

"Why do you trade with them?" the old abbot asked reproachfully. "They are not honest men."

"They are thieves," Okada agreed deliberately to draw him out.

The abbot started a tirade in the high pitched quaver of old age when he suddenly remembered the sacred obligations of hospitality.

"But you are tired and hungry now," he said. "Come and share our supper."

He led the way toward the door of the turtles. Okada paused to regard these minutely. His long

studentship under that master of oriental antiquities, old Tanabe, had not been wholly in vain. Some of the despised lore which he had waded through, neck-deep, had stuck to him for life. A curious antique in a shop window always brought him to an involuntary halt, as now the ingrained habit of noticing archaeological oddities pulled him up sharp before the stone turtles.

"Where did these come from?" he asked the abbot.

"They have always been there."

And with that devastatingly complete answer he passed on. Okada followed his companion slowly, lost in thought. Unless his memory deceived him those stone turtles could not possibly be of Chinese or Korean origin. They were more like Indian sculptures than Chinese, and the species of turtle which had inspired the artist was different from that which has become conventionalized in Chinese art. Musing over the riddle he recurred to the strange picture on the western wall. Kameda and the abbot had disappeared in the room beyond. Hastening back to the picture, Okada scrutinized it minutely.

The first anomaly which arrested his attention was the curious perspective by which the artist had revealed his design. A cursory glance might fix it as of Chinese origin; closer inspection showed that the drawing was executed according to some radically different principle of representation. In vain Okada tried to place it in its proper niche of oriental art. None that he recalled from his half forgotten studies had room for this outlandish yet pleasing drawing.

An extremely faint discoloration on the bright blue of one cliff caught his eye. Looking closely he made out the faded trace of a written character in some script which either he could not decipher, or which was too nearly obliterated to be intelligible. A rapid inspection of the other vivid patches of color on the rocks revealed similar faint traces of writing. Evidently the artist had painted his picture first in durable mineral colors, such as pulverized lapis for the blues, and had lettered it afterwards in perishable vegetable pigments. It flashed into Okada's mind that the picture was more than a work of art; it was a page from a treatise on minerals.

Here no doubt was a fragment of the original from which the rolls that Tanabe stole had evolved with the slow evolution of written speech. The originals, he guessed, had long since perished; the transmuted copies bore but slight resemblance to their prototypes. How had the monks obtained possession of this fragment? Probably neither they nor anyone else would ever be able to say. The old abbot would express the common opinion by saying "we have always had it."

Hearing his host coming to look for him, Okada hastily examined the material on which the picture was painted. To his astonishment he found it to be spun glass, more delicate of texture than the finest silk. A last rapid look at the unfaded colors showed that they had not been laid on with a brush, but were fused into the fibres of the glass itself. The whole picture was a woven work of art of beautifully col-

ored spun glass. The faded legends on the colored rocks had been painted on, and with the lapse of ages had all but vanished.

"I was looking at these turtles," he explained, rapidly going to meet the old man. "They are fine pieces."

"We have always had fine things," the aged abbot replied with pride.

"You are an old order?"

"Older than Cho-sen."

"How can that be?" Okada asked.

"I do not know. It is so."

"Your traditions say that you came here when Cho-sen was young?"

"We have no traditions. We are too old."

"Then how do you explain the great antiquity of your order?"

"We do not explain anything. The Japanese will explain everything to you if you ask them. Can you explain anything?"

"No," Okada admitted. "Still, I sometimes try."

"Because you trade with the Japanese. Are you a merchant?"

"I buy and sell."

"What do you buy and sell?"

They had rejoined Kameda, so Okada felt safe in misinforming the old man.

"We are traders in plants."

The abbot brightened. Flowers and vegetables were his passion.

"You must stay and see our garden," he exclaimed. "There is no finer garden in Cho-sen or," he added

emphatically, "in the world. When I could see well I never tired of looking at the flowers and leaves. Now they are still beautiful. I like the hazy patches of green and red better than the leaves and flowers. You see more that way."

Okada expressed their combined thanks, but feared that they must leave early in the morning as they had a long journey before them. They were on their way to collect some rare azaleas they had heard of farther up the mountains.

"I know," the old fellow agreed. "I was that way when I was a young man. Once I walked fifty miles to see some lilies. They were as red as the embers in a winter fire. I shall never forget those lilies."

And so, chatting in friendly fashion, they joined the monks at their evening meal. Kameda discreetly let Okada do the talking, contenting himself with a yes or no when a question was addressed to him. From the old man's outburst in the lacquered vestibule it was plain that the monks had some reason for disliking the Japanese. Okada of course guessed that his friend Tanabe had inspired this feeling; Kameda was diplomat enough to act on a hint that had nearly knocked him down. So he wisely held his tongue.

The monks were all old men. Their abbot seemed to be the senior in age as well as in rank, and therefore doubly to be respected. They were a gentle lot, talking over their meal with the same enthusiasm for their hobby of gardening that other old men in less comfortable clubs reserve for bridge, chess and golf. Okada learned the reason for the advanced age of all

the monks. Contrary to his expectation he was not met with the reply, "we have always been old," although in a sense this was true. No new member was admitted to the community until an old member died, and the newcomer was always invited from among the older men at other mountain monasteries. This, of course, was an admirable plan for ensuring congenial fellows. It would soon have ended in mutual extinction however if all the mountain monasteries had been of the same mind. Luckily they were not, so the world has at least one perfect club to show the superior man from Mars when he arrives to criticize our institutions.

At the conclusion of the meal the old men became lively and insisted on talking. It took only a question from Okada to start the ball rolling in his direction.

"You do not see many Japanese up here?"

The Abbot exploded like a ripe old squash. Kameda discreetly changed his seat to a dark corner to avoid the scrutiny of the old men. One or two had been peering at him closely with their aged eyes. They had seen only one or two Japanese in their long lives, but many Koreans. If their guest was a Korean he was rather a queer specimen. Okada, on the other hand, excited no suspicion. The pure Korean looks like a Caucasian whether he is one or not. There is none of the Mongol about his aristocratic features. To the old men Okada might easily pass for a noble of Cho-sen. Little Kameda with his surprised hoot-owl expression was a different kind of animal. So he very wisely made himself inconspicuous when the Abbot began to erupt.

What that mild old lover of beets and roses did

not say about the Japanese may be heard in any polite drawing room. Perhaps he drew rather a long bow on their pilfering, their lying, their commercial dishonesty, and their callous determination to 'get there' even if they had to walk over their competitors' faces to arrive, for obviously the old man could not have spoken from first-hand knowledge. All his life he had been a monk, more or less of a recluse, unspotted by the mud-slinging of buying and selling. Nor had the old gentleman the scientific way of looking at things. Like all untrained minds he generalized at once from a single instance to a universal law. The Japanese scholar who had robbed their monastery about fourteen years previously must, in the old man's practical logic, be typical of his whole race.

To Okada this impassioned recital of Tanabe's doings at the monastery was no surprise. He had always suspected his revered teacher of putting scholarship and the faithful service of the same on a much higher level than conventional honesty. Okada therefore did not blush for shame when he heard his fellow countryman called an illegitimate son of a she-pig.

Kameda in his obscure corner sat drinking it all in greedily. At last he was hearing how those precious rolls fell into Okada's hands. They had not of course dropped directly from the archives of the monastery into Okada's outstretched arms. The missing link in the chain was easily supplied, however. Okada had done to Tanabe as the latter had done to the Abbot. Kameda blushed for nobody.

Then the trembling old man went on in a shrill

treble to reconstruct the means by which Tanabe had taken advantage of their hospitality, Kameda's admiration all but broke prudent bounds. It seems that Tanabe must have surreptitiously carried the rolls out of the monastery one at a time during his fortnight's stay, and down the stone stairway one by one under his long robe, to hide them in the bushes out of sight of the monastery until the night he left. Then his servants collected the treasures and followed their master.

Little Kameda wondered whether Okada would still have the brazen nerve to deny that he was the missing Okada from Somerville. Okada's nerve was unimpaired. Not the flicker of an eyelash betrayed that he had ever heard of the precious rolls. He acted his part perfectly. Not yet was he ready to declare himself.

Okada expressed the deepest sympathy for the Abbot and the profoundest contempt for the Japanese thief. He trusted that the scoundrel had not robbed them of all their "fine things"? Surely they had even finer rolls in their archives?

The Abbot's face took on a mask of what to him, no doubt, was devilish cunning.

"That thief got only twelve of our poorest rolls. He won't find the rest if he ever comes back."

"You would know how to hide them, I'll swear," Okada murmured. His voice was all but inaudible under its great weight of admiration.

The Abbot was pleased.

"I'll show you," he said. He was as eager to tell his secret as a child. Tottering out to the vestibule

he beckoned Okada to follow. The latter did so, with not too great a show of alacrity. All of the monks were not so shortsighted as their guileless old Abbot.

In the vestibule the old man felt his way till his hand touched the head of one of the stone turtles by the door. Then he gave a strong, firm push. The turtle and its stone pedestal slid back easily, revealing a short flight of stone steps.

"Our older archives," the Abbot announced proudly. "Would you care to see them?"

"It would be interesting," Okada admitted. "But is it not rather dark down there?"

"Perhaps it is," the old man replied. "I myself do not see well. Take one of the lanterns."

Not too eagerly Okada unfastened a lantern from its post.

"Shall I go down alone, or will you show me the way?" he asked.

"I'll come too."

Luckily for the sanctity of their relics, several of the other monks decided to join the party. This was a new way of killing an evening.

The 'archives' turned out to be a roomy cellar hollowed out of the living rock. In the earliest days, the Abbot explained, it had been used as a retreat by the holiest of the holy men when they wished to retire for a season from the world to ponder on their own sins and those of their brothers. Later, owing possibly to a decline in holiness, the monks had used it as a store-room for dried chilis, millet, onions, and yams in the winter season. Being bone-dry and always at about

the same temperature it made an ideal larder. Since the 'thieving Japanese' had taught them the folly of keeping their heirlooms where any scoundrel could pilfer what he chose, they had converted this ancient repository for holiness and vegetables into what they fondly imagined was a strongroom.

Along the walls were piled the rolls, old books in bales, and scraps of priceless manuscripts in forgotten tongues, like firewood in a cellar. The choicest bits of porcelain, the finer silks, and the old bronzes which the monks regarded as too precious to lose, were neatly arranged in heaps on the floor.

It was a room to make the director of any museum forget at least one of the ten commandments. Even the long dormant antiquarian slumbering beneath Okada's shell of modern science awoke, roused from its troubled sleep by an excessive itching of the fingers. All these things, he said to himself in justification of his impulse to steal, were of no use to the monks who could not understand them. But what would not a historian give for a year's use of this cellar? No doubt those rolls held the key to the mystery of the Korean people. In them would be found clues leading clear back to the Aryan migrations in Asia, and the coming of the Mongols. It was little short of a sin against the holy spirit of learning that all this secret knowledge should be locked up under a room in which a lot of ignorant monks ate vegetables by the bushel and drank tea by the gallon.

Permission was readily granted Okada to inspect the rolls or anything else that roused his curiosity.

Half an hour of turning over those treasures almost made Okada forget his mission to the north. The stifled antiquarian in him was alive and breathing normally for an hour at least. Almost was he tempted to forego his self-appointed task for the glory of Japan until he had thoroughly explored that enchanting cellar. Then, with a pang, he realized that this young American, Blye, might beat him in the race and nullify all his labor. He dared not rest even if he would.

Several of the rolls were evidently companions to those which Tanabe had stolen. These were of rice-paper like their missing mates. The writing and drawing on many however indicated a different age. Some, Okada guessed on his rapid inspection, were much older. These no doubt were a part of the originals from which Tanabe's sample had evolved. Others again were at least five hundred years younger. All, he saw at a glance, would repay the most minute study.

It was with an electric shock that he came upon the first fragment of a record in spun glass. This undoubtedly was part of the same roll as the picture in the vestibule. Like the picture this fragment still showed extremely faint traces of lettering on the indelibly colored glass.

One after another Okada scanned the twenty or so fragments of what without doubt were the very first originals from which the long generations of rolls had evolved. On some there were representations of men engaged in mining operations, all drawn in the same curious perspective as the mountain scene in the vesti-

bule. These however were very imperfect, the glass fibres having given way centuries before as a result of folding and rough usage. The mountain scene apparently was the one perfect fragment which the monastery possessed.

Not all these bits of spun glass depicted scenery or primitive science. Some were obvious attempts at allegorical drawings, the earliest script which, with the lapse of ages, had become the true writing of the rolls. These, Okada hazarded, were fragments of primaeval history. More passionately than ever he longed to free himself from the cursed shackles of duty, but habit and heredity were too strong for him. With a sigh of regret he turned to follow the monks out of their treasure room. To have lingered any longer would only have excited suspicion.

It was now bedtime, for the monks believed in getting up early. The guests were shown to a tiny room with sleeping arrangements for two. Bidding them good night their guide left them to the mercy of their consciences.

Okada began it. He went directly to the point.

"You now know," he said, "where those rolls came from that were found in my study at Somerville."

Kameda all but gaped at him.

"I am afraid I do not understand," he replied in confusion.

"Perhaps I have overstated myself," Okada apologized. "You may indeed be ignorant of my private life as Mr. Shortridge's assistant. But do not imagine for a moment that I have been deceived as to what was

in your thoughts when you came to Cho-sen. In Fuzan I thought it best to offer you deception in place of the truth and you, I was glad to see, accepted my flag of truce. You were not in doubt as to my identity at any time. You knew that you had found the right Okada, and I knew that you were aware of your success in tracking me. I am but the more deeply indebted to you for playing the game as I called it. It does not matter how you tracked me. Whether Miss Shortridge betrayed me, or whether this geologist Blye guessed who I might be, and so gave you the proper clue to my place of hiding, are now matters of no consequence. We are here together, and alone, far from possible interference from spies. In Fuzan I may have doubted my own mind occasionally. That does not matter. Now I am sure."

"I expected this," Kameda murmured. "If you had not spoken soon, I should have taken the initiative. Disguises are no longer necessary between us."

"The need for them is past," Okada agreed with a ceremonial bow. "You are a Samurai of the older belief?"

"I am no modernist," Kameda exclaimed emphatically, as if the mere name made him sick with disgust.

"All along I have known it," Okada assured him. "From the beginning I felt that you would share my opinion as to what is best for Japan. But I thought it wiser to wait until I could know you better. Now I have learned to trust you."

Kameda in his turn bowed low.

"We are sons of one father," he murmured.

"And our father may sometimes be mistaken?"

"It is true," Kameda admitted with regret.

"As for instance," Okada suggested with an insinuating smile, "when he sent you to spy on me?"

"Without doubt," Kameda agreed.

"You would disobey our father if that should be for his own good and for the glory of Japan, for the true greatness that we elder Samurai cherish?"

Kameda deemed the answer so obvious that he contented himself with a nod, and Okada continued.

"When you tell the Emperor that you were unable to do what he has asked of you, you will be executed for treason."

"Need I tell him?" Kameda inquired innocently.

"You have never intended returning to Japan?"

"Never. If you have remained dead to Japan all these years, the reason for your disobedience to the Emperor's wishes must be the reason of a Samurai. That is enough for me. I have put my life and my future in your hands."

Okada bowed, more deeply this time.

"I shall use both," he replied, "as a Samurai would wish to have them used."

A slight shiver ran up Kameda's spine at this suave assurance.

"Do you know," Okada continued, "the object of my visit to the north?"

Kameda with perfect truth confessed that he did not. The Emperor merely had told him that Okada's business was of the first importance for the future happiness and prosperity of Japan. All that Kameda

was ordered to ascertain was the exact itinerary of Okada, who was not to be frightened or in any way molested on his travels. He further was commanded to render immediate report of what he learned as soon as he found the means to do so. The ex-consul freely confessed all this, in complete frankness, to his brother Samurai. The time for concealment and double dealing was past. Okada's next sentence confirmed Kameda's diplomatic use of the truth.

"Now that we know each other, I shall tell you my history since I left Japan. Then you will understand why I am going north. I shall hold back nothing. The Emperor has shown rare judgment in not trusting the nature of my secret, which Narumi must have half guessed years ago, to any agent. The mere knowledge that such information as mine exists, however imperfectly and however vaguely as yet, would be sufficient to set all western civilization besieging the gates of the imperial palace. Narumi can not know as much as I know, yet he knows enough to grasp its supreme importance, and he undoubtedly has convinced the Emperor. No human being other than these two even suspects that I have secret knowledge, unless possibly that American geologist has guessed in a dim way. I am not sure of him; he must be dealt with later. For the present I propose to tell you everything. When I have finished you will know more than Narumi and the Emperor can ever dream, though they live to be a thousand. You are the one man to whom I have ever hinted a word of what I have known for over fourteen years. When I tell you why I disap-

peared, and why I am now going north, you will agree that I have acted always, as I shall continue to act, solely for the true greatness of Japan."

"And I shall share in your work," Kameda added proudly.

"We are sons of one father. You shall share. First, let me confess why I distrusted you. I thought that you were following me simply to learn my secret. You could not have guessed its nature beyond the fact of its great value. Knowing my secret you would have at your command whatever you desired. Are you ambitious? My secret will gratify your ambition, whatever it may be, unless it is like mine for a greatness which cannot be weighed. Do you seek power? My secret can make you more powerful and a greater scourge to the nations of Asia and of the western world than ever Genghis Khan was. I thought you desired these things, and would betray me to obtain them. I thought too that you were intending to deceive the Emperor, not as you are about to do for his own good and for the true glory of Japan, but for your private, selfish profit. But now, having walked with you through the spring, having marked your deep and simple love for azaleas, I know that you are a true Japanese at heart, and a loyal son of the Samurai. It is in these little things that the truth lives. I apologize for having misjudged you."

Kameda's forehead touched the floor. If Okada had indeed misjudged him the bow was a respectful acceptance of his brother Samurai's apology. If on the other hand Okada was setting a subtle snare for him,

Kameda's bow was a simple and effective device to conceal his inward satisfaction at this supreme triumph of diplomacy. With rare delicacy, exactly suited to either alternative, he contented himself with a bow. To have uttered a single word would only have spoiled the perfect Japanese simplicity of it all.

"To give you the true setting for what I propose to do in the North," Okada resumed, "I must go back to my early life as a student at the Imperial University."

And so he rehearsed the story of his association with old Tanabe, his conversion to science, his discovery regarding the gold tooth and what this signified, and the epic of his struggles since leaving Japan. When he came to the forecast of what he was about to do in the north, Kameda was stunned by its sheer boldness. Only a Samurai could have conceived an idea of this magnitude. If Kameda regretted that his leader should make such a use of his epochal discovery as he now intended, he wisely refrained from comment. This complete revelation of Okada's secret so far transcended even the most daring of Kameda's uninformed guesses that he was indeed reduced to silence. The thing was stupendous, beyond the imagination. And he was to participate in the final act.

"And so," Okada concluded, "you will see why that picture in the vestibule may be of use to us. It may be of no value when we try to use it, but we may as well neglect no possible aid. We must accept the monks' invitation to see their garden to-morrow. I dared not ask to-night about the gold tooth which Tanabe found

here. We must make the Abbot talk again of the Japanese. Then he will remember and tell us without being asked. If he has another we must find it."

Kameda gazed at him with honest admiration.

"I wondered why you did not carry your pack up those stone stairs," he remarked with a chuckle. "You had not seemed to feel its weight on the steepest hills."

Okada smiled back at him.

"When we leave here we may have to run downstairs, and it is harder to climb down with a load than it is to climb up."

Well satisfied with themselves the two worthies dropped off to sleep. Okada's sleep was dreamless. Kameda tossed uneasily all night. Subconsciously he feared that he might talk in his sleep and give himself away. It was a lifelong affliction of his.

CHAPTER XIV

DOWN

WHILE Okada and Kameda were praising the monks' primulas and irises, Blye was cursing all liars who draw maps of places they have never seen. At last he was in the mountains of his desire, and for the moment at least wishing he were out again. The truth is that he was hopelessly lost. According to the map there should be a pass to the southwest through the forbidding mountain range on the farther side of the valley in which he was now camped.

The map which had deceived him was not that of the Japanese geographer, for he had not yet got far enough south to consult that masterpiece of the geographic imagination with profit. This specimen happened to have been devised by an English collector of seeds for the flower trade. So far as it went the map was accurate in a stolid sort of way, but it did not go far enough. The botanist had evidently taken a shortcut between two rivers and had filled in what he missed by interpolation. Blye voted him a poor guesser. There was nothing for it but to retrace three days' journey and try again to hit the right valley with the southwestern pass. Ordering Ivanoff to see

to the packing up, he strode off alone back over their trail, about as happy as a bear with boils.

And while Blye was nursing his futile rage in a country where spring is this earth's best substitute for paradise, too sulky to notice the rich gold of the yellow Manchurian roses aflame on every slope of the swelling foothills, Geraldine was trudging the streets of Yokohama in a frame of mind scarcely happier. Thanks to Okada's generosity she still had plenty of American bills left in her purse. With ordinary prudence she could continue living at the shabby hotel of her choice for six months longer if she so wished. But she did not care to face the prospect. She was young and full of energy, and she was sick to death of loafing. Also her conscience had begun to bother her so she could not sleep. Ten thousand miles can cool the hottest temper. After all, Geraldine was forced to admit, her mother *was* her mother, and she had been kind to her when she was little. The rest had been partly Geraldine's own fault. Her father too was not a bad sort at bottom. In fact he was quite jolly, although a little too strict at times, especially when he carried home his business worries to inflict on his family.

Having gone to one extreme Geraldine now fled to the opposite. She almost persuaded herself that she alone was to blame and that her parents were far better than she deserved. Of course this was rubbish, as she admitted to herself when she contemplated what would happen if she ever should be so foolish as to go home. She had broken once and for all with her

old life. Her parents belonged to the eighteenth century, certainly to no year later than 1820, when New England was about at the peak of social rigidity. She herself was a young woman of the twentieth century with no more inhibitions than it is decent to have, and her affair with Okada had developed her wonderfully.

But conscience would not down. To appease the fiend she darted into the post office and bought a card. Then she wrote to her mother.

> DEAR MOTHER: Please do not worry about me. I am well and happy. I did not leave home to go to Mr. O, and I have no idea where he is. I left because I wished to be independent. You and father can be sure that I will never do anything to disgrace either of you. I do not need any money. If you do not hear from me, assume that I am well and working happily for my own living. It will be useless for you to try to find me, as I shall not stay here. Your loving daughter, Geraldine. P.S. If I have caused you and father any worry, I am truly sorry.

Having relieved her conscience of one burden, Geraldine walked briskly out of the post office determined to rid herself of another nuisance. She would have no reminder of her foolish past to trouble her business-like future. After half an hour's walk she found what she was looking for, a sign in English announcing that Dr. James was a D.D.S. She hoped he was American and not English; the English dentists, she had heard, are a trifle heavy-handed.

Dr. James proved to be American, a young man

recently arrived to try his luck in Japan. So far he hadn't had much luck. The American tourists were sent to him from the hotels, but the Japanese seemed to avoid him. He set Geraldine down as a tourist.

"What can I do for you?" he asked.

Geraldine promptly took the operating chair.

"I want that tooth out," she said, pointing to the one which the Somerville dentist had capped at her request.

Dr. James washed his hands scrupulously and examined the tooth.

"What seems to be the trouble?" he asked.

"It doesn't feel right."

"Rather drastic treatment to pull it," he commented. "Perhaps a slight alteration in the crown might make it fit better."

"No, I want it out."

"But I do not like to extract teeth unless there is a good reason."

"If you won't do it," Geraldine retorted, half rising from the chair, "I shall go to the Japanese dentist down the street."

"Very well, young lady. Just as you say. But you'll regret it before you're thirty."

"I shall never regret it if I live to be a hundred and thirty. Gold crowns are ugly things."

"Yours doesn't show," Dr. James temporized as he selected a forceps from the sterilizer. "Sure you want it out?"

"Positive."

"Will you have gas or a local anaesthetic?"

"Neither, thank you."

"Then I refuse to pull it," the dentist retorted with an air of finality. "It is bad enough having to hold down all the squirming kids they bring in here, without deliberately butchering obstinate young women. The Jap down the street will enjoy cutting you up."

Geraldine glanced at him.

"Give me novocaine," she snapped, "if you've got it."

She had wanted to suffer for her sins, and this smart young man was only making her feel foolish. It was a good thing he did, for the molar, as he expressed it, proved to be a regular 'bull tooth.' He got it out skilfully, crown and all. Just as he was about to throw it into the waste jar, Geraldine detained his arm.

"Please give it to me," she said between intervals of rinsing her mouth.

"If it's the cap you want," Dr. James suggested, "I can split it and take it off for you."

"No, I want the whole thing," Geraldine replied. She did not wish him to think she was haggling for a dollar's worth of gold. The dentist placed the gruesome relic in an envelope and handed it to her.

"How much?" she asked.

"Five dollars will be right."

She laughed. "That is just what it cost to have it crowned."

"A Jap did it?"

"More or less."

"No wonder you wanted it out. I don't blame you in the least. Good morning."

Feeling as light as air Geraldine boarded a street car for the waterfront. Arriving there she took a brisk walk along one of the quays, looking round from time to time to see whether any one was observing her particularly. All seemed intent on their own business. Taking the tooth, gold cap and all, from her purse she flung it with all her might far out over the oily waters of the bay. It fell with a tiny splash, never to be seen again by the eye of living man. Geraldine's eyes were the last that caught its farewell flash in the morning sun. The Emperor would have given at least one eye to have seen that flash.

Having disposed so satisfactorily of her shady past, Geraldine set a determined face to her brighter future. To make life endurable she must find employment. Taking a car back to the centre of the city she speculated on her attainments. She had a good high school education and one rather futile year of a famous girls' college behind her. Why on earth, she asked herself, don't girls' colleges teach something that is not utterly valueless in the market? She mentally thanked Heaven that she had rebelled before the second year of it.

Dismissing her education as a mistake, although perhaps an unavoidable one in the present state of culture in Massachusetts, she sought out the only agency for the relief of distress which she could trust. There were more imposing agencies in splendid buildings on the main streets, with efficient staffs of well trained

secretaries to take the money of all comers and keep it safely for them, but Geraldine rather distrusted these showy pharisees among the distressed. She knew where she wanted to go, for she had often passed the place. It was in a shabby quarter of the city on a side street, the sort of district that sailors flock to when on shore leave. There was nothing pretentious about this Great Headquarters. The money received from well wishers of the Army was not lavished on hideous façades, but went to the lining of impoverished stomachs and to other equally inconspicuous works.

The middle-aged woman in the black poke bonnet with the red badge of moral courage around it, asked Geraldine to take a seat until her turn was called. At the moment she was trying to find out whether the young Norwegian sailor really was broke, whether his ship had actually sailed without him, or whether he was merely working an old trick to get a couple of yen for another spree. Under her searching examination the young sinner finally collapsed, confessed that he had been drinking, et cetera, and walked none too steadily from the bare reception room. A Japanese girl was next. Nice Christian girl she was, according to her own account, out of a job. Where had she worked last? On being told the bonneted woman remarked that it was a blessing for the girl's soul that she had lost her job. This one was disposed of with an addressed card and just enough money for carfare. If she wanted to be respectable, as she professed, she might begin by working as a kitchen maid.

Geraldine's turn was next. The bonneted woman looked her over. They were alone in the room.

"Are you in trouble?" she asked, with a significant glance at the good clothes and new shoes.

"Not that way," Geraldine stammered with a blush. "And I haven't come for money. I want some sort of work. Do you know of anything?"

"What can you do?"

Geraldine thought desperately for half a minute.

"Nothing but housework," she confessed with a feeling of shame.

"You could not do that in Japan," the woman replied, "unless you did it in your own house. The servants here are all Japanese girls. Have you been here long?"

"Not very."

"Where are you living?"

Geraldine told, and the woman seemed to consider. As a matter of fact she was trying to estimate how much Geraldine's clothes had cost. They were of good quality but not expensive. She was sure they had not been bought in Japan.

"You had better tell me everything," she said suddenly. "Unless I know your circumstances I can't help you, can I? Have you run away from home?"

"Yes," Geraldine acknowledged boldly.

"Why?"

"Because I thought I wanted to marry a Japanese."

"And you found you did not?"

Geraldine nodded.

"Then you are luckier than some girls I know. They

didn't learn their mistake until after they had married. Why don't you write home?"

"I have written."

Geraldine said it in such a way that the woman should infer that help from home had been asked and refused. But this old hand at dealing with miserable sinners did not trust to inferences. She always insisted on facts.

"Your people have cast you off?"

"I don't think so—I don't know. But I am not going back. I must earn my own living."

"You seem to be truthful," the woman remarked. "What education have you had?"

Omitting names, dates, and places, Geraldine outlined her school career. She closed with an appeal that the Army should not try to find out who her parents were, where she had come from, or when.

"Of course we shall not," the woman asserted as a matter of course, "if you ask us not to. Now about work. Why not put an advertisement in the papers offering to give lessons in English to Japanese girls and women at their own homes? It is done by American women living in Japan."

Geraldine brightened.

"I could do that," she exclaimed. "How much should I charge?"

"Say 'prices reasonable' in your advertisement, and arrange when you call on the people. I should judge that two yen a lesson would be a fair price. The Japanese women of the better families are very anxious to learn, especially from foreigners. You will be well

treated wherever you go. But at first you must have an interpreter to show you about. You speak no Japanese?"

"Only a few phrases that I learned from . . ." Geraldine bit her tongue in time to prevent the escape of Okada's name. The woman smiled.

"Very well," she said. "I am not curious about his name. Now, the interpreter. I wish I had not just sent that girl away."

"But she was not respectable!" Geraldine protested.

The woman looked at her quizzically.

"None of them are," she said, "according to our standards. But they are all right in their own way. I shall send another girl later to your hotel. What name shall she ask for?"

"Miss Forsyth."

That evening a young Japanese girl, as pretty as a pansy, presented herself to 'Miss Forsyth,' and offered her services as guide and interpreter for the nominal sum of three yen a week. Geraldine tactfully did not ask the girl whether she was respectable, taking it for granted that she was, in her own way. With her help the construction of an alluring advertisement was easy. The girl left after half an hour to take the result of their labors to the principal newspaper offices.

Two weeks later Geraldine had all she could do. Out of gratitude she walked round one evening to the Refuge to leave as a donation the remainder of Okada's American bills. Being on her own feet now she disliked the further use of his money.

If Okada could have known how Geraldine had

finally disposed of his gold tooth, he would have been strongly tempted to turn back from the monastery and wring her neck before proceeding with his business.

With the brother Samurai whom he had tested and found true, Okada laid his simple plans for a pleasant farewell evening with the monks. His real appreciation of flowers and his sincere admiration for the perfect gem of a garden which the old, all but blind Abbot exhibited with so much pride, won him the freedom of the place. He might have rested there a week without once exciting suspicion. Kameda discreetly kept in the background, wandering by himself under the cypresses by the edge of the cliff, or flitting like an owlfaced moth through obscure thickets and windbrakes of the vegetable garden. When evening fell, and the hospitable monks invited their appreciative guests to share a feast of their choicest homegrown delicacies, the two men were sons of that venerable family.

After the meal Okada skilfully turned the talk toward the aggressive Japanese. One heated remark by an old man led to a hotter by some other conservative grower of beets; this in turn caused the expert on onions to erupt, and this again exploded the gentlest of them all, the cultivator of Chinese roses. It was but a moment till the Abbot was in full flood, denouncing the beggarly scholar who had stolen their rolls and pilfered "like a common thief" certain trifles—although some were by no means trivial—which might easily be concealed in a flowing sleeve.

What, Okada asked, had the contemptible thief pur-

loined besides the rolls? The Abbot began an inventory. It included jade trinkets, silver finger-nail cases such as the Chinese use, old—very old—ornaments of coral and beaten silver, one or two of the smaller bronzes which the old men had especially prized, and last—but the old man hesitated as if in shame. It was too mean to tell. Okada gently pressed him. Almost in tears the Abbot declared that the scoundrel Japanese, who called himself a scholar, had stolen the half of their priceless medicine.

Okada's blood leapt through his veins. So they had another gold tooth. Probably they had several, but preferred not to boast of their most valuable treasure too loudly. They might be overheard and robbed. Professing to misunderstand what precisely it was that the scholar had stolen, Okada expressed his astonishment that any thief could be so mean, hinting that he thought the Abbot must be mistaken in his accusations.

The Abbot's treble rose. He was not mistaken. Far from it. The means by which that disgraceful thief had pilfered their holy medicine were beyond belief for downright petty meanness. He had gained their confidence. Then he had complained of being ill in exactly that way which the medicine was most efficacious in curing. Feeling sorry for their guest they had lent him half their medicine. When in the dead of night he rose from his supposed sickbed and made his way secretly out of the monastery, taking with him the trifles of jade, silver and coral, he forgot to leave behind the medicine which he had borrowed.

"But how can one borrow medicine?" Okada protested with well feigned incredulity.

The Abbot's face actually became crafty.

"Ours is a peculiar medicine," he admitted mysteriously.

"It must be," Okada agreed, with just the right inflection to show that he disbelieved the old man's story, but was too respectful of age to express his incredulity.

The Abbot swallowed the bait.

"See," he said, "I will show you. I myself am not well."

His lean old fingers fumbled at the silken cords of his gabardine. At first he drew forth a little bag of silk at the end of a string fastened apparently about his waist. Opening the bag he rolled out a crude gold tooth. Okada's eyes glistened, but he gave no other sign of his excitement.

"That is not medicine," he said, as if puzzled.

"Indeed it is," the old man asserted.

"You mean it is a charm to keep off evil spirits?"

"Is it not the same thing?" the Abbot demanded somewhat irritably.

"Certainly," Okada agreed, "What kind of devil is this medicine good for?"

"The ugly kind that gets into men's bodies as a very small devil and grows to be a very big devil, feeding on their life and strangling them to death."

"I understand," Okada said gravely, with a glance

almost of pity at the Abbot's nearly blind eyes. "May you be cured."

"I am an old man," the Abbot replied. "Why should I live?"

"Because you still can see the red and the green."

"True," the old man sighed. "Our philosophers say it is not good to love life too much."

"You are not so very old."

"A man of my age should be ready to die. I find it hard. The philosophers are wrong, I think."

"They always are," Okada agreed. "As for me, I am a young man, yet I do not love life for its own sake."

"Then why do you keep it?" the old man asked pointedly.

"For the honor of my country," Okada replied with perfect sincerity.

"Ah," said the Abbot. "That I understand. Cho-sen needs honorable men now that these Japanese have defiled her."

"You have spoken a great truth," Okada agreed. Again he was honest in what he said. Cho-sen, if his ideals prevailed, should not be prostituted by his countrymen.

"Would you," he asked the Abbot, "be willing to lay down your life for Cho-sen if you were a young man like me?"

"Many times," the old fellow responded readily, forgetting in his enthusiasm that only cats have more than one life to sacrifice for their fatherland.

And so, with mutual good will and respect, they

parted for the night, the old men to their narrow cells, the brother Samurai to the tiny guest chamber.

Kameda and Okada did not retire. Nor did they converse much, even in whispers, for fear of disturbing the rest of their hosts. As it often takes old men a long time to get to sleep, the two maintained their unholy vigil till about three in the morning, when surely the lightest sleeper of the monks should have dozed off. Slipping his shoes into his belt, Okada motioned to Kameda to do likewise.

"You get the picture in the vestibule," he whispered. "Unbar the door and wait for me."

He took his small Japanese dagger, a Samurai implement, from its sheath concealed in his clothes. It was a *hari-kari* knife, short, straight, and thin, as sharp as a razor. Then, shading the lantern with his sleeve, he stole along the passageway to the Abbot's cell, while Kameda, noiselessly as a bat, flitted and felt his way along the wall till he reached the vestibule.

Outside the entrance to the Abbot's cell Okada paused to listen for the old man's breathing. It was regular and deep. The Abbot was asleep. Samurai though he was, and sacred though his duty, Okada devoutly hoped that the Abbot was a sound sleeper. He would regret having to use his knife, no matter how cheerfully the old man might lay down the sorry remnant of his life for Cho-sen the beloved. Nevertheless if fate forced him too hard, Okada would not struggle to hold back. It was for the honor of Japan.

Carefully shielding the lantern with his sleeve so

that the light should not fall on the old man's face, Okada stood like the stern spirit of death looking down on the sleeping man. Then, with extreme care, he dextrously slit the heavy, quilted silk of the covering above the old man's waist. The sleeper stirred, and Okada instantly froze, the knife in his hand still meshed in the silk. The old man muttered, and turned over. Okada was forced to slit the other side of the quilt. This time the sleeper did not stir, and Okada lanced the old man's undergarment as skilfully as a surgeon.

The brown old skin lay bare to the dim light of the lantern. Okada saw what he was seeking, but the bag was on the other side, under the sleeper. He severed the string by lifting it on the top of his blade without touching the skin. Then, forced to rougher action, he took his chance. He gently moved the quilt from the sleeper's back. Again the old man half moaned and turned uneasily in his sleep, exposing the little silken bag. Okada cut it quickly from its string, slipped it in his belt, and stole from the cell.

Kameda saw the faint reflection from the lantern flit over the head of one of the guardian turtles. In the dark he had been unable to find the latch which fastened the bolts of the door, and feared to search too minutely for fear of raising a disturbance. In the sudden glow, faint but sufficient to his eyes after the dark, he saw what he had missed. With the picture rolled up under one arm he started to unfasten the bolts. Nervousness made him bungle. One wooden bar

slipped, evaded his frantic clutching, and thundered to the stone floor.

Instantly the monastery resounded to the shrill shouts of old men who for two days had talked of thieves. Okada dashed for the doors, flung them open and lugged Kameda after him.

"Down!" he shouted.

Kameda, diplomat that he was, kept his head. He had blundered with the bolts. On the stairway he would not blunder. To force Okada to go down first he dropped the rolled picture and fussily groped to pick it up. The ruse appeared to work, for with a shout to hurry, Okada leapt down the stone stairway on the face of the cliff. Kameda hastily gathered up his roll and followed with alacrity.

By this time the place was alive with angry old men in their sleeping garb. Lights hurried to and fro, old swords clattered on stone floors, there was a click as of a musket being cocked. Suddenly and prematurely the ancient Chinese blunderbuss, loaded to the muzzle with black gunpowder, exploded with a reverberant din that was appalling.

That startling racket all but paralyzed Kameda. The shock was so unexpected that for a second he stopped. So did Okada, instantaneously, as he reversed his direction. Leaping up the steps three at a time he gripped the terrified wretch by the shoulder.

It was not merely in bitter irony that Okada uttered the words "For the honor of our father and the glory of Japan," as with a quick jerk he tossed the wretched

man free of the cliff, hurling him like a shard far out into the black night.

Not pausing to hear the shriek or the thud, Okada sped down the stone steps. Reaching the bottom he readily found his heavy pack where he had left it. Strapping it on, he next put on his shoes and searched with his feet till he stumbled across the body of the man who had professed his willingness to die like a Samurai for the honor of his country. Okada struck a light. A glance at the body showed him that Kameda was dead. He looked about for the picture. It lay not ten feet away. The falling man had clutched it in terror till his impact jarred the picture from his hand and the life from his body. Okada rolled up the picture, tucked it into his belt, and silently vanished into the night.

He had merely anticipated one detail of his general plan. Kameda had told all he knew, and was no longer anything but an encumbrance. It might have been more dramatic but less practical to have spared his life till it became necessary to eliminate the American geologist.

Defeat of the enemy in detail is a sound principle of strategy. Okada believed in seizing the occasions he created. Chance he despised. Had Kameda but known it he sentenced himself to an early death when he told Okada all that he knew about Blye.

CHAPTER XV

UP

BLISSFULLY unconscious of what Okada intended doing to him should they ever meet, Dinosaur was enjoying every breath of the balmy spring air in the mountains, so far as the midges would let him. After many vicissitudes he had at last found his way, and was beginning to recognize landmarks which no doubt corresponded to some of the 'impossibilities' on the Japanese explorer's fanciful map. These preliminary checks of what he had imagined must be works of the pure imagination, spurred him to press on and see whether the rest existed.

His present occupation was shared by the affable if shifty-eyed Ivanoff. They were alone with two faithful pack mules, now their only companions, the rest of the train having been sent home ten days previously. From what he expected or hoped to find, Blye judged that the lighter the pack train the greater the speed and the more probable the ultimate success of the expedition.

"Get that one!" he exclaimed to the nimble Ivanoff.

The interpreter skipped to the farther mule, slat in hand, ready for execution. A huge, striped gadfly, as big and as lazy as a cockchafer, was just getting ready

for business on the mule's inviting flank. Ivanoff smashed him before his efficient gimlet pierced the thick hide.

"How many does that make?" Blye asked.

"Two hundred eighty fo' " Ivanoff responded in his chinese English.

"Then these bring it up to two ninety," Dinosaur announced, as in quick succession he swatted a family of six that had just arrived for dinner.

It was not merely the love of sport but sheer necessity that kept the two men skipping like ballet dancers round their mules, more or less disdainful of the smaller pests which preferred human blood. But for their efficient swatting of those vicious gadflies the mules would have bled to death before nightfall. As it was, the blood dripped from more than a dozen needle pricks. The mules seemed to understand that the slaps were intended in friendship, and kept their heels to themselves.

"Do you suppose these beasts could find their way home from here?" Blye speculated.

"What for they should go home?" Ivanoff demanded suspiciously. "We allee samee takem back home."

"You have no imagination, Ivanoff," Dinosaur retorted disgustedly. "I am asking you to contemplate a beautiful abstract problem; and you come back with one of your usual stupid, practical answers. Now suppose, if you are capable of supposing anything—swat that one!—that we come to a path too narrow for these fat beasts to waddle along. There are such trails

up the sides of cliffs. The mules will have to be left, won't they?"

"Me no leavem."

"Faithful Swatter! How you must love your brothers. But I think you will leave them, because I shall have need of your gift of tongues. How am I to talk to the people we meet? You have done first-rate so far, although half the time I'll bet you didn't understand a word of what the other fellows were saying. Still, you have always managed to invent something just as good to tell me. So you see I simply can't send you back with the mules. They will have to find their own way, or spend their old age lower down where there are fewer of these fat yellow flies." Ivanoff's half-breed Chinese face took on a stolid, immovable obstinacy. Blye broke into a roar of laughter.

"You look exactly like the gray mule," he shouted.

The interpreter didn't like it. The force with which he popped the next gadfly was quite unnecessary. He made no reply.

"Do you think these mists will clear off before evening, and give us a chance to see where we are?" Blye resumed. "You needn't get sore, you know. Say I look like the brown mule if you think so."

"Me no savee," Ivanoff muttered, as glum as an undertaker.

The mists did thin a little before nightfall, but not sufficiently to show the details of the surrounding mountains. As a last shaft of the afternoon sun transfigured their tiny valley into a replica of Eden, Blye eagerly got out his field glasses and peered into the

thinning veils between him and the farther ranges. Only dim blue masses, hints of pinnacles as sharp as the teeth of serpents, and indeterminate blurs of many colors loomed up through the milky white.

"We must wait for a wind," he sighed, putting up his glasses.

As the sun set the gadflies went home to roost. The weary swatters were free to explore their paradise in the twilight.

"Kameda would enjoy this," Blye thought, remembering how the little consul had fingered the petals of his chrysanthemums in the Greek restaurant. "That must have been at least two thousand years ago. I wonder if it ever existed? Is there such a place as Boston? I doubt it. And what is the little Kameda doing now?"

He strolled through the perfect, natural garden, stopping often to admire some rare or curious lily he had never seen before, while Ivanoff prepared the scanty evening meal and blew up a smudge to annoy the clouds of midges. The little glen was heavy with spice of yellow day lilies and sweet with the fragrance from large patches of lily of the valley in a dozen different varieties. The reddish glow from the western mists accentuated the vivid scarlet of the low-growing clumps of a rich, fleshy flower like a begonia, and brought out the true colors of the stately tiger lilies. The blue of the monkshoods deepened, the massed bluebells became indistinct, and the great sheets of irises on the marshy hollows retreated slowly before the advancing night. Blye turned and retraced his

steps to the ruddy glow of the campfire. Already a chill had fallen on the air. Supper, even with Ivanoff, would be good, and eight hours' sleep in a warm sleeping bag immediately afterward still better.

The supper was everything that could be desired, except as to quantity, for Ivanoff was a good cook. Either man could have eaten the other's share and still felt hungry. Ivanoff solaced himself with his usual pipe of opium, 'the beggars' meat,' while Blye contented himself with a pipeful of shag. Then he took up the slack in his belt and slithered into his sleeping bag.

The anticipated eight hours of bliss was rudely shattered shortly after midnight by a terrific peal of thunder. Like a huge bird the wind swooped down from the surrounding heights, carrying off pots, pans and the lighter boxes from the unprotected camp. The men struggled up to give battle to the elements and to pacify the terrified mules. Their sleeping bags took wings in the howling night and vanished to be seen no more. When the exhausted pair searched the valley in the morning they found not a trace either of their bags or of half their camp outfit. The miniature tornado had snatched them clean out of the valley. After the first wild gust, the wind settled down to a steady, snoring gale from the west, bringing with it a deluge of icy rain. Drenched to the skin, and with chattering teeth, the men hung on all night to the trembling mules, themselves scarcely happier than the terrified animals. It was a storm of unreasonable violence. Such things, Blye thought in a numbed way, do not

happen in decently conducted mountains. There must be some cause for this incessant thunder and these lashing, stinging sheets of rain.

Long before morning he guessed the cause of the uproar. A strong, pungent reek of burning sulphur tainted the later gales, and the ground beneath their feet heaved uneasily from time to time, to lapse again to quiescence in a series of jarring shudders. Blye knew when he started that he was going to a volcanic region, but he hardly expected to arrive in time for an eruption. When at last the wind dropped and the sun leapt over the crags to their left, he saw that a minor volcanic disturbance was the only event to be reasonably expected in such a region.

They first noted in their stunned condition, when the sudden day broke, that the storm had left the air as transparent as glass as far as the eye could see. At first they were too bewildered to take in what they saw, and realized only the havoc in their immediate vicinity. The wind had cut the tall lilies and levelled the grass as with a scythe. More mercifully it had swept the air clean of insect pests.

Blye's first impression was of a vast amphitheatre surrounded by jagged peaks, sheer pinnacles of bare rock, and at least a dozen smouldering cones. Glancing to the west he saw the cause of the storm. A huge pillar of dense smoke, as black and as velvety as soot, streamed up to the blue vault of the morning sky, to mushroom out like an immense black cauliflower and be cut sheer off by the upper winds, which unfurled it in a vast scroll against the western dome. Lightnings

still darted in and out of the pillar, seething like Medusa's serpents about its top, and occasional streaks of vermilion or crimson at its base showed where the incandescent lava was still being spewed up.

"One mo', two mo', three mo'!" Ivanoff yelled in alarm, drawing Blye's attention to three magnificent cones from which the slow black smoke oozed. These could scarcely be said to be in eruption; they were merely keeping their fires up. The safety valve was blowing off a good fifty miles west of them.

"Hooray!" Blye shouted. "How's this for luck? I'll bet this is the best show they've staged for a year."

Luckily his field glasses were in the pocket of his coat, and not in the vanished sleeping bag. Scanning the walls of the huge amphitheatre in a first rapid survey he counted no fewer than eleven cones that could reasonably be suspected of being still alive. Fully twenty others, to all appearance dead, towered along the southern and eastern walls.

"Ivanoff," he said, "I've come to the right place. If you knew Joly's theory of volcanoes you would say so too. In celebration of our victory let us finish the bacon."

"Where in hell you catch him bacon?" Ivanoff scoffed. "All blow 'way."

It was indeed true. The choicest of their stores had vanished with the sleeping bags on the wings of the night. Of the grub chests only the heaviest, least inviting remained, some hundred yards away, sorely battered but not absolutely wrecked. They breakfasted on dough pancakes.

"Unless we find a farm hereabouts," Blye remarked cheerfully, "I fear we shall have to go on rations."

"No fa'm," Ivanoff declared disgustedly.

"I'm afraid you're right. There probably isn't a decent human being within a hundred miles of here. We shall have to eat the mules before we get back."

Ivanoff sourly swallowed a lump of half raw dough.

"What you got in that box?" he asked hopefully, pointing to the heavy packing case which Blye had brought with him from Vladivostok. It was the one thing the wind had failed to lift very far.

"You ask me that question every morning, Ivanoff," Dinosaur replied, "and I always tell you it is none of your darned business. This morning, considering what a rotten breakfast you're having, I'm going to make an exception and tell you what that precious box contains. Did you ever hear of whales?"

"Big fish," Ivanoff exclaimed, brightening. His next remark, culled from reminiscences of some missionary's Sunday school, showed that the poor fellow had conjured up a fragrant vision of plentiful dried fish snugly packed in the mysterious box. "Jonah allee samee swallow whale," he elucidated. "Him hip good chow."

"Your education, Ivanoff, seems to have been as badly mixed as your nationality. Your ideas of whales are unorthodox. That box couldn't possibly contain a whale."

"No fish?"

"Not a scale. Still, as you will see for yourself

before long, I hope, that box is not wholly unrelated to whales."

"Me no savee."

"Live and learn," Blye retorted, surveying the depths beneath them with his field glasses, "as I am doing now." He handed the glasses to his companion. "Take a look down there—no, over that way, at the foot of the burning mountain. What do you say it is?"

"Big rock," Ivanoff said at once. "Like box."

"Yes," Blye agreed, "it is fully as steep as the sides of a box. Now take a look at the rocks on the mountains over there. What about them?"

"Velly pletty," the interpreter commented, his Chinese half responding to the marvelous blend of colors like the sheen on a peacock's tail, or the iridescence on the wing of a gorgeous butterfly, which blazed in the full sunlight on the farther cliffs.

"They're all of that," Blye agreed. "If you had been forced like me to name tons and tons of rocks, and tell what gave them their different colors, you would see how beautiful those mountains really are. Those cliffs over there must have been chock full of pockets of rare metals ages ago, just like a cake loaded with rich plums, candied cherries, greengages, dates, almonds—I beg your pardon! I forgot you have had nothing but dough for breakfast. But I must talk to somebody, even if it's only you or the gray mule. This place is paradise, man! All those pockets of metal and ledges of rare minerals weathered out ages and ages ago in the storms and ran down the faces of the cliffs, staining the rocks like a rainbow. Some of those hori-

zontal bands and streaks of deeper color show where the harder minerals are still undecayed. There must be thousands of tons of malachite in that bright green cliff over there to the left. And just look at that ledge of dark crimson—darker than a heap of dead ripe cranberries—above the broad band of light green! That's cinnabar, the rock you roast to get quicksilver. Tons and tons and tons of it. The stuff seems to be everywhere, mixed up with the iron reds and the cobalt blues, the cadmium yellows and the lapis greens, in great smears of crimson. If nothing else, this whole amphitheatre is the hugest pocket of quicksilver in the world. The rocks over there must fairly ooze mercury, sweating it out in little beads of silver, like drops of water on a nasturtium leaf. Take a look at the magnificent yellows and scarlets farther down, the last traces of millions of tons of lead compounds rotting out of the rocks, all jumbled up with the velvety blue of the azurite, where that cliff split in two to show what was inside it! Did you ever see the like? This is the world's melting pot. All the scraps of minerals that were left over when they made the Andes and the Rockies, the Himalayas and the Mountains of the Moon, were dumped down here to be melted and roasted together into one conglomerate mass of colors, like a thousand shattered rainbows, by all those extinct volcanoes.

"Just think, Ivanoff, if you can feast your eyes for a moment and forget your pinched belly, what a gorgeous sight it must have been with two dozen or more volcanoes roaring day and night, some spouting flames

greener than emeralds as they roasted the copper in their furnaces, others spitting out showers of dazzling yellow sparks as they burnt up the iron, and still others lighting up the pinnacles for a hundred miles with the color of fresh blood as they vaporized the strontium. We see only the last of it, millions and millions of years after the metals were mixed, the ores made, and the furnaces closed down till the next time the earth needs a new set of mountain chains. In a way the last is better than the first. The colors are richer; rain and ice and sweltering heat have blended them into one stupendous picture, where every splash of color, bright as a flame in itself, shades into the next in perfect harmony. Only a Chinaman like you would have nerve enough to attempt to paint such a picture."

"Me no Chinese," Ivanoff retorted indignantly. "High-toned Russian."

"All right," Dinosaur laughed. "Now, as a high-toned Russian, what is your expert opinion of this orgy of crags and colors, pinnacles as sharp as needles, cliffs like the rainbow, jagged saw-toothed spurs, up-ended masses of archaen intrusions, that huge, dark blue plateau, of sheer rock apparently, down there at the bottom of the theatre, and last, that active volcano black as Erebus, with the smouldering eleven to set it off, and the extinct twenty to show what this place was in its glory?"

"Hell," said Ivanoff disgustedly.

Blye accepted the verdict good-naturedly.

"That's the Russian of it. Personally, I prefer your Chinese verdict of 'velly pletty.' Sorry I can't offer

your Russian half a slice of bacon or a slab of whale steak. Hand me the glasses a moment."

For half an hour he minutely searched the faces of the multi-colored cliffs with a growing sense of wonder. The glasses revealed them as pocked and pitted with caves, the entrances to long disused galleries, or more probably cross sections of tunnels long since laid bare by the violent subsidence of the mountain masses. In some distant age the entire amphitheatre, it appeared, had been honeycombed by a race of miners as industrious as boring-worms. What were they seeking? Gold? Quicksilver? Iron? Lead? Surely not; these metals must have been accessible in such a place with practically no labor before the torrential floods of a million thaws sluiced them down the river beds. Copper might well have attracted a primitive people. But what could those earliest metallurgists have wanted with thousands of tons of copper?

Blye dismissed at once the fantastic hypothesis that a highly civilized people had once dwelt in this spot before the cataclysmic earthquakes wrecked it. They might well have been sufficiently advanced to tunnel the mountains and move vast masses of rock piecemeal, as the early Egyptians did, and possibly the still less civilized Easter Islanders. But to picture them as sufficiently advanced to know the real use of copper, as a conductor of electricity, was too great a stretch of the imagination.

For several reasons he preferred to visualize them as but little higher than barbarians when the slowly accumulated observation of perhaps thirty generations

crystallized into one simple, obvious fact that had stared them in the face for over a thousand years. It was a fact that any race of savages might discover for themselves when surrounded by the right environment, and it was Blye's not altogether wild guess at the existence of such a fact in the early history of a race that gave him his first tangible clue to Okada's secret.

The profound mystery of nature which those primitive metallurgists had blundered upon was one which would instantly arrest their attention after the first slow, accidental successes in its use. How does a tribe ever discover that the bark of a certain tree is a remedy for the fever that plagues them? The problem is more difficult when the bark of the tree, as in the case of quinine, is decidedly unpleasant to the taste. Yet the Peruvian Indians made precisely this discovery. How it can come about in the first place may be hard to guess: the fact is that it happens repeatedly.

The long-forgotten primitive race in this amphitheatre, according to Blye's theory, had stumbled across a precisely similar fact of the very first importance. Once it has been grasped that certain herbs or roots are beneficial in disease, it is not long until fairly efficient means are devised by the tribe to enable them to obtain a supply sufficient for their immediate needs. They may even collect more than is actually used, if they are energetic, and pass it to other tribes in barter. The greater demand increases efficiency, and the gathering of the precious stuff reaches the first, primitive stage of an industry.

Blye imagined that such, roughly, had been the his-

tory of the tunneled cliffs of the amphitheatre. Working in stone is one of the first developed of all the great trades. In a few centuries the Egyptians passed from the mud-brick stage of their evolution to that in which they quarried and transported blocks of granite weighing upwards of twenty tons, and built the pyramids. So, Blye guessed, the first great primitive metallurgists who had lived in this vast amphitheatre, had passed in the course of a few centuries from their haphazard scrapings and borings to the wholesale tunneling of a mountain range. The mere urge to get at the stuff, precious to them in the most practical way imaginable, which lay buried or locked up in pockets in the solid rock, would stimulate invention. The use of copper and its hardening for cutting-tools, the discovery of the pipe-drill and the use of wooden pegs and water instead of our modern explosives to break up masses of the most intractable rocks, would all follow rapidly, as they have repeatedly in the known history of primitive peoples. The tunnels would not be an impossibility after the lapse of even a thousand years from the first attempts at mining.

Dinosaur had observed so-called uncivilized or semi-civilized tribes at first hand. His continued astonishment was not at the daily miracles of ingenuity which they performed in order to get the most out of their environment, but the perennial stupidity of savants who believe that man is a deaf, blind, dumb, and handless animal, with less than an idiot's intelligence, before every new puzzle of daily life that presents itself.

Having finished his inspection of the gorgeous blaze

before him, and having at the moment no further philosophical speculations on primitive mining, Blye ordered Ivanoff to saddle the mules in a hurry.

"We're going downstairs to have a look at that big blue box at the bottom. How high do you say it is?"

Ivanoff refused to commit himself beyond one unnecessarily profane estimate of no scientific value. Blye estimated the lowest point of a long dip as two hundred feet from absolute bedrock. The length of the "box" might be twenty-five or thirty miles, its breadth about the same, and its average height five hundred feet. He counted even without the glasses a full score of small lakes, from a quarter to half a mile long, and about a quarter of a mile broad, on the plateau, all of the intensest green-blue. These lakes were a decided puzzle. Geologically they had not the slightest reason for existence in such a place. The Japanese explorer he now guessed had caught only glimpses of the whole plateau through the mists as he worked his way round the amphitheatre. What he had seen he had mapped faithfully enough. Evidently he had visited the place at the wrong season, never getting a clear day on which to take in more than a fleeting snapshot of a fragment at one time.

Although he searched long and carefully with his glasses, Blye could detect not the least sign of a building or anything that might pass as a human habitation. Slightly to the east of the centre of the plateau a small nub of an extinct volcano, a mere baby, showed that the massive core of basalt or harder rock had not been immune from volcanic disturbances before the last

terrific upheaval, which must have isolated the 'box' like an unsinkable raft in a rough sea. In the last great cataclysm, probably long ages after the first eruptions, the less rigid floor of the primæval valley had fallen away from the central core, leaving the sheer cliffs of the rocky 'island' to tower above the general ruin in solitary grandeur.

They reached the base of the cliff before sunset. Blye had steered a course directly toward the centre of the 'dip.' His estimate was a little too low; two hundred and fifty feet of perpendicular rock stretched between him and the spot he longed to reach. He was determined to find out what was on top of that plateau. Further exploration being out of the question in the dark, the tired men lifted the packs off their faithful mules, hobbled them to graze, and searched for a sheltered spot in which to pass a night without sleeping bag or blanket.

Poor Ivanoff was ready to commit suicide. Blye promised either to find him a warm spot or to start home immediately. After an hour's prospecting he discovered what he knew must exist in abundance in that volcanic valley, a nest of steaming blowholes. An occasional suffocating whiff of sulphur served only to heighten the sense of warmth as the night closed down on them. On rocks pleasantly warm they curled up and went supperless to sleep, too tired to care for dough.

Hunger routed Ivanoff out before sunrise. Blye found him making "bread" over a fumarole. He took his rifle and went in search of the unfortunate early

bird. Two clean shots netted him a couple of Chinese pheasants. Ivanoff forgave him everything. After a hearty breakfast Blye announced his plans.

"First I must get some more birds. You can cook them. They are not to be eaten. See?"

Ivanoff saw, as Dinosaur had given him special instruction in the art. In that inaccessible place the poor birds were as tame as geese. Less than an hour later Blye returned with four more pheasants and six Chinese mallards.

"These must last us two days. Get busy. They will boil in fifteen minutes in that soupy sulphur water."

Ivanoff cleaned half the birds. These he boiled for Blye's rations. The rest he prepared in the manner which a Chinaman likes, assuming rightly that half the plunder was to be his. He next, under orders, prepared a batch of bread.

"Now," said Blye, when all was done, "you take the gray mule and ride round this big box to the left. I'll go round to the right. We should meet somewhere on the other side either late to-morrow afternoon or early the next morning. You are to look at every foot of the wall you ride past and see if there is any place that a goat could climb up to the top. Savee?"

"What do with him box?" Ivanoff asked solicitously, almost covetously.

"I am taking the whale box with me," Blye informed him. "You might lose it."

"You no can lide and cally box."

"Who said I was going to ride? I'll walk it. And I'll walk most of the night, so as to beat you on your

half. So that's settled. Hustle. I've got the rifle. You can't live on flour, so don't try to give me the slip. Those fowls of yours won't last you beyond to-morrow. I promise you at least a dozen when we meet. So long."

They separated, each going his own way.

"Ivanoff!" Blye shouted when he had gone a hundred yards. "If you see any Japs on your travels, tell them I'm here. Be good, and don't let any Jap get within knifing distance of you."

They met on the morning of the third day.

"What luck?" Blye shouted as his companion hove in sight.

"No luckee," Ivanoff croaked. He was in the deepest gloom. "What you do here, anyhow?" he inquired confidentially when they met.

"To tell you the honest truth," Dinosaur confessed, "I don't exactly know myself. My idea is that I must get up on the top of this plateau. What about something to eat? I see your birds are all gone."

After a meal and a rest, Blye closely questioned the interpreter. Had he spied any point of the plateau lower than the 'dip' from which they had started? Ivanoff had. The place must be approximately opposite the first dip, on the other side, and less therefore than half a day's journey from where they now sat devouring ducks and tough bread. The whole valley floor was pocked with fumaroles, so there was no difficulty about cooking, provided they had anything to cook. Blye unfolded his plans.

"From what you say this place you noticed can't be more than two hundred feet high. Come on; I'm going to climb it."

"No can climb," Ivanoff protested vigorously. "You clazy."

"Not crazy," Dinosaur replied. "Say rather the eccentricity of genius. I thought all this out in classic Cambridge, not far from America's most famous monastery, where our greatest lamas impart their wisdom to our young priests." He took the Japanese explorer's map from his pocket and endeavored to explain its contours to Ivanoff. "So you see I am not so crazy as you think. I had to figure out a way of getting to the top of this precipice without flying. Come on, and I'll show you how it's done. We shall be on top before sunset."

Blye's prophecy was only in part fulfilled. The incalculable human element, as usual, played havoc with his rigidly scientific prediction. They reached Ivanoff's 'dip' about five o'clock that afternoon. The long shadows from the crags and serpent tooth pinnacles were already casting their deep purple over the table and when Blye began knocking the cover off the whale box. Ivanoff looked on with painful curiosity and half superstitious dread. To show his unconcern, however, he lit his pipe and stood smoking indifferently.

"In half an hour we shall be on top," Blye predicted, "or I shall have broken my neck, and you'll be walking back to Harbin with the mules. Lend me a hand to get this thing unshipped.

Ivanoff helped Blye to carry the long brass tube

mounted like an antique cannon the proper distance back from the cliff. Blye then seated himself and did some figuring on the back of the Japanese map. He knew the horizontal range of the rocket gun, so it was an easy matter to calculate the angle of elevation so that the barbed harpoon should rise high above the lowest point of the plateau and come swishing down barbs first. With reasonable luck the point should pierce the soil of the plateau to a depth sufficient to anchor the barbs the first shot. If not, he must haul in the line and try again. In all he had six full charges for the rocket. If all failed he must walk home or wait till Okada turned up to show how he for his part intended climbing the precipice.

He carefully laid out the long line with its rope hand grips at six-foot intervals so that it should not foul the rocket as it shot from the gun. To the wondering Ivanoff he explained that similar cannon were used in the old days for shooting harpoons into distant whales. Ivanoff apparently took it all in, retiring hurriedly to a safe distance when Blye lit the fuse.

"It's a good thing we kept our matches in our clothes," he remarked, as the fuse sizzled and sputtered. "Otherwise you would have had to rub two sticks together for half a day."

His remarks were cut short by the soaring rush of the rocket. It went over the top of the cliffs in a high parabola, turned gracefully a full hundred feet above the plateau, and dived nose down with a clearly audible thud into the soil, two hundred feet above them.

"A hit," Blye shouted running to the face of the cliff.

Grasping the line he swung himself back and forth, testing it with his full weight.

"She holds!" he exulted. "I'll go up first, like Columbus discovering America. Watch how it's done. Then I'll haul up our flour and the rifle. If you can't swarm up a rope, stick your foot in one of these lugs and I'll pull you up somehow. Well, I'm off. Here goes. Kiss the mules goodbye for me."

He rapidly swarmed up the rope, resting every thirty feet until he was half way up. Looking down he saw with horror that Ivanoff had picked up the rifle and was cocking it.

"Put that down," he yelled. "You can't shoot straight, you fool! Wait till we get up here, and I'll shoot you a hundred ducks. Let those birds go!"

But the low flying flock of mallards was not Ivanoff's target. Taking deliberate aim at the dangling form against the face of the precipice, he pulled the trigger. The slug pinged harmlessly against the rock twenty feet below Blye and far to the left. Ivanoff aimed again, with no better success. His shifty eyes made him but a mediocre marksman. He emptied the magazine and hurled away the rifle in disgust.

But, having shown his full hand, Ivanoff now was forced to play the game to its immediate end. With truly barbaric devilishness he thought of an ingenious plan for bringing Blye down. Running to the face of the cliff he took out his matches. Then, bending over to shelter the tiny flame from the breeze, he lit the

tar-soaked line. The flame struggled feebly at first, took courage, flickered along a foot of the line, and then raced upward, leaping from one lug to the next. Ivanoff skilfully waved the line back and forth to enable the flame to bite on what it might otherwise have missed.

Blye was climbing like a monkey within twenty feet of the top when the smoky flame racing after him scorched his legs, leapt a good four feet to the lug he was about to grasp, and flickered hungrily at the clear stretch above. Not feeling the pain Blye clutched at the flame and tried to squeeze the life out of it with his bare hands.

CHAPTER XVI

FOLLOWED

GERALDINE's dutiful postcard to her mother all but precipitated what the statesmen call a crisis. Within twenty-four hours after Mrs. Shortridge in a state bordering on hysterics had read it aloud to her husband, the Secretary of State was rushing across the continent by special train to make steamer connections at San Francisco for Japan. Like 'Mr. Doi' he travelled incognito, passing as plain 'Mr. Smith.' What his prospective business might be he did not confide to his fellow cabinet members. They contented themselves with the obviously false information that the Secretary was on the verge of a nervous breakdown and in need of a rest where affairs of state would have difficulty in finding him. Officially he was on his way to Florida. Only the Secretary's confidential stenographer was given the address of the American Ambassador in Japan. She was to communicate with Mr. Smith through the Ambassador should anything of real importance develop. In particular any message from Mr. Blye was to be cabled in full immediately.

The Shortridges knew nothing of Mr. Smith's flattering interest in their daughter. Had they but known they might have been unduly hopeful, for the wily

Missourian was still a bachelor. No girl had yet shown him anything worth looking at—so he declared.

The Chief of Police in Boston was the immediate mover of Mr. Smith's special. After Blye left for Vladivostok, the prudent Secretary dropped in on the Chief who had already obliged him in the matter of Okada's mysterious rolls, to chat and to arrange for future business. He asked to be informed by telegram the instant anything fresh developed in the 'Shortridge case.' The Chief then and there called up the stations at Cambridge and Somerville, requesting them to let him know at once should anything be heard of the 'Shortridge girl.'

The Secretary, now Mr. Smith, cared not two whoops about the Shortridge girl's virtue or her lack of it. He left the shocked press to its veiled innuendos should it ever become public property that she had written from Japan. It did so become a spicy tidbit to millions of American breakfasters just as Mr. Smith's special ripped through Salt Lake City.

The Shortridges were very jealous of what they insisted on calling the family honor. When Geraldine's postal arrived, Mr. Shortridge sped to the police, begged them to counsel him how best he might force his erring daughter to return, and implored them not to tell the reporters. The police replied that they could do nothing, as the girl was of legal age, and now her own mistress, at least. They promised to keep it from the papers, and advised Mr. Shortridge to go home and forget it. The moment he was out of the station they informed the Chief in Boston; the Chief wired

to the Secretary of State, and the Secretary developed his nervous breakdown.

On reaching home Mr, Shortridge talked it over, endlessly, with his wife. The honor of the house was at stake. Of course Geraldine was not telling the truth in her message. What if the truth should come out? Never again could Eliakim Shortridge cut old Brander whose daughter had run away from home. It was too horrible. They had better be courageous, lie boldly as the occasion demanded, and stop any possible leak before it happened. The police would talk; reporters would pick up loose ends of the gossip, and before they knew where they were, they would be branded for life as the parents of "the Shortridge girl."

They took the bull by the horns, telephoned for the society editor of the local paper, and let nature take its course. The society editor was charmed to hear that all anxiety about Miss Shortridge's mysterious disappearance had been so happily cleared up. It appeared that Geraldine had eloped to be married in Tokyo to Mr. Reginald Baker, an old childhood friend, now a prosperous exporter of Japanese tea.

The society editor was a well trained young woman who knew better than to ask awkward questions about dates or places. She left with the assurance that the bride's picture would be given the place of honor (if it can be called so) on the front page of the Sunday Society section. And so Geraldine received in all the papers which had 'girled' her for weeks a perfunctory coat of whitewash as "Mrs. Baker."

The Shortridges felt perfectly safe in their strategy.

Although they were sufficiently ignorant to suspect their daughter of moral delinquency, they knew her well enough by this time to have no doubts as to her obstinacy. She would never disgrace them by coming home. If ever she should write for money, they would spare her all they could. But as for having her back in Somerville, it was impossible. Shortridge went about his business with a slower gait, and Mrs. Shortridge talked less and thought more than she had hitherto done in the whole of her married life.

Mr. Smith caught his steamer by the scant margin of forty minutes. Before going aboard he sent a long cablegram in code to the American Ambassador at Tokyo. He then followed the steward to his stateroom and resigned himself to the inevitable, for the Secretary was a landsman and a poor sailor. The last thing in which he took an intelligent interest for several days was the escort of plaintive gulls which followed the liner to the Golden Gate, uttering their lost-soul cry at unexpected intervals as if prophesying shipwreck and death for all on board.

The Secretary's theory was quite straightforward. Contrary to Blye, he had always believed in the genuine importance of Okada's gold tooth. He had not the slightest idea why it should be an object of international concern, yet he was fully convinced that such was the fact. The Emperor, he reasoned, would not have gone to such extraordinary trouble over a mere trifle. If the tooth was indispensable to Japan, it must be doubly so to the United States. Even if he never

did succeed in learning what the Emperor wished to do with it, the Secretary believed it to be his duty to prevent the gold tooth from falling into improper hands. By improper he understood non-American. The Secretary was a matter-of-fact man, with few illusions about the 'brotherhood of man and federation of the world.' Rightly or wrongly he held that human nature is all too human, and that the most elementary way to ensure your own prosperity is to see that your neighbor does not become unduly happy. Stripping the polished phrases and the platitudinous beatitudes from international goodwill, he believed himself to be merely expressing in plain language what his fellow statesmen believed in their hearts but denied with their smooth tongues. In the interests of expediency he was willing at any time to make public speeches in behalf of what he considered impossible utopias, but when it came to playing the game he would quietly assume that his opponent meant to skin him if possible, and quickly forestall that painful operation by peeling his opponent and salting him well.

Believing as he did, the Secretary heard of Geraldine's postcard from Yokohama with feelings akin to panic. When she disappeared from Somerville he assumed with Blye that she had gone to keep her appointment with Okada, and he trusted that young Blye would ultimately harvest whatever good might accrue to Okada from Geraldine's constancy. The Secretary had a lot of confidence in his young friend Blye. The young man was no fool, even if occasionally he seemed a little too eager to believe in the fundamental

honesty of his fellow men. Blye would be able to manage Okada, he figured.

When Geraldine failed to keep her appointment with Okada the Secretary grudgingly admitted that a girl had at last shown him something worth seeing. It was obvious that she had not gone to Okada, because that much wanted man would not dare to return to Japan to be nabbed by the Emperor he had been hiding from. It was barely possible that Geraldine had kept her pact, delivered the tooth, and been cast off by the haughty Samurai. In that case she would be hiding her shame in Yokohama, whither she had returned after meeting Okada in Korea. More probably she had lost her nerve when it came to the sticking point of eloping with a Japanese, and was now roaming the streets of Yokohama, too frightened or too ashamed to return home, with that precious gold tooth in her head. If so it would not be long, the Secretary guessed, until she found herself the centre of an intense and unpleasant interest. He half doubted whether she would ever again be heard of. In the meantime it was his obvious duty to catch her first. He would see that she was properly treated.

In at least one detail of philosophy the Secretary of State was dead right. Geraldine at that moment was urgently in need of some sort of protection, and she was as ignorant as a lamb of what threatened her. It all came about in the most natural way imaginable.

When young 'Mr. Doi' returned to his Imperial home, he was closely questioned, not once, but at least

once a week, by his illustrious father and by the famous, sharp-witted Professor Narumi. It did not take the two long to find out that Mr. Doi had completely failed in his commission for the Empire. Why had he let this Shortridge girl get away from him? In vain Mr. Doi expostulated for the hundredth time that it was not his fault. The United States secret service men had let her escape, not he. Yes, but why hadn't he told them never to take their eyes off her day or night after once getting a clue like that one about her dentist? 'Mr. Doi' pointed out that Geraldine had already levanted when the secret service men began to hunt for the dentist. Yes, and again yes, but they knew that a gold tooth was to be looked for when they interviewed her that morning at her own home. Almost in tears Mr. Doi reproached his inquisitors for not having been more explicit when they sent him on so important a mission. Why couldn't they have told him he was to look for Okada's gold tooth?

"How could I have told you?" answered the Emperor in a level voice. "I did not know myself what was to be sought. Neither of us knew."

"I was only told to look for anything unusual and to follow the consequences," Doi added. "Tanabe couldn't make sense of the rolls. The only part that didn't sound like pure nonsense was that about the gold tooth—or the gold teeth. What else could I do but suppose Okada had one of those gold teeth?" he concluded.

"It is too late now," the Emperor confessed. "We should have trusted Kameda from the beginning. He

would not have let this Shortridge girl get away with the tooth. We should have told him to follow the American geologist," the Emperor continued. "It would have been easier. Okada is elusive."

"Perhaps he has," Narumi suggested quietly.

"What do you mean?" the Emperor demanded weakly, going the color of an unripe lemon.

"Kameda seems to have known a great deal about Blye. The American may have bribed him."

"Kameda may be loyal," said the Emperor. "Doi's report about this Miss Shortridge shows at least that there was a young woman, as Kameda said, who may have known where Okada was going. The United States police told him this girl ran away from home because she was in love with Okada, and afraid of her parents.

"How did they know?" Narumi asked. "She may never have left America. Blye and Kameda kept her out of the way till Mr. Doi left. The American police were paid by their government to betray us."

"Of course," agreed the Emperor. "We should see that our own secret service did the same if the President were to ask us to find about some American in Japan."

Narumi only smiled.

"We can not undo our mistake," he admitted graciously. "Suppose Miss Shortridge never left America. She still has the gold tooth. If Kameda fails to find Okada and rob him of his secret he can still return to America with Blye and get this tooth which Miss Shortridge has."

"What?" the Emperor exclaimed. "Why cannot we get it?"

"They may have told Miss Shortridge to keep out of sight till they return," Narumi suggested.

"We can find out whether Miss Shortridge has gone back to her home. If she has——" but he thought it unnecessary to complete the sentence. The possibilities were too obvious.

"It is a chance," the Emperor admitted, "but a slender one. Still, it is our duty to Japan to leave nothing undone."

He summoned the confidential secretary and dictated a long message to be put into code and transmitted immediately to the Japanese ambassador in Washington, D. C. The ambassador was instructed to move with all discretion, but to find out at any cost what had become of Miss Shortridge of Somerville, Massachusetts. In his inquiries he might use any means he thought fit and safe.

Within sixty hours there came a long reply to this message. The Ambassador had made a preliminary study of the files of the Boston papers. The Emperor sent at once for Narumi.

"She is in Japan," he said shortly when the chemist arose after his ceremonial obeisance on entering.

"Then so is Okada," Narumi replied instantly. "He shall not escape this time."

"I fear he is not in Japan," the Emperor admitted, somewhat dashed. "Miss Shortridge left home to marry an American, a Mr. Reginald Baker of Tokyo."

"Then she still has the tooth," Narumi said deci-

sively. "Probably she never knew where Okada was going. Kameda lied, expecting us to hear that she had run away from home. He counted on having time enough to join Blye before we could discover his lie and catch him."

This theory seemed reasonable. The Ambassador's report stated that Geraldine had eloped, and that her parents had only recently learned her whereabouts. Before sifting the evidence further the Emperor set the necessary machinery in motion for locating 'Mrs. Reginald Baker, wife of the tea exporter in Tokyo.' The police were merely to find out where she lived. The proper parties would then be despatched to Tokyo to extract her gold tooth.

On closer examination of the Ambassador's detailed history of the Shortridge affair the treachery and the duplicity of Kameda's diplomacy began to emerge. To their chagrin the Emperor and Narumi now learned for the first time, from a comparison of dates, that Kameda's last Boston cablegram was composed after Geraldine had eloped.

Narumi began to doubt whether after all Kameda had joined Blye. Possibly he had been hand in glove with Okada for years and had now gone to rob him. This however seemed too simple, too honest. The skeptical chemist touched the very nadir of disbelief.

Forty-eight hours later Narumi and the Emperor received the comforting news that no such person as 'Mr. Reginald Baker, tea exporter of Tokyo' ever had existed. He was a myth. The question now was, whose

myth? Another of Kameda's? They sent a second cablegram, longer than the first.

Eliakim Shortridge should have known that his daughter's sin would find him out. It always does, be one never so respectable. When the Japanese Ambassador from Washington, D. C., called on him in person at the Somerville factory, frock-coated and with silk hat in hand, Mr. Shortridge shouted till every copper pot in his jewelry foundry rang like a deep-throated bell. Only the Ambassador's agility saved him from personal violence. He skipped from one side of the office to the other till the bellowing father subsided suddenly and unexpectedly into a swivel chair. Then, very politely, for he had guessed much more than the worst, he persistently bored out of Mr. Shortridge the humiliating truth that he knew not where his daughter was and that he cared less. The last of course was mere rhetoric. Mr. Shortridge ended by begging, almost on his knees, this little frock-coated man to save his reputation as a father and not let his bald head go down in blushes to the grave.

The Ambassador was himself the father of a daughter. Moreover, in spite of his official dress he was a decent sort. And furthermore he had learned all his Emperor had asked him to ascertain. He was convinced that Mr. Shortridge had not the slightest idea where his daughter was. Therefore he gladly assured Mr. Shortridge on his honor as a gentleman and an ambassador that the disgraceful secret should remain locked in his bosom till it was cremated.

The Ambassador's second report tempted Narumi to revise his estimate of Kameda. But the hour for character testimonials was past; immediate action was the order of the day. One fact in all this tissue of deception stood out like a pillar of light in a blind man's dream. Geraldine actually had written a postal to her mother. The Ambassador had learned everything. That priceless postcard was mailed at Yokohama. There was the proper place to begin the search.

When all the police power of a highly organized empire is focussed on one poor sinner, it is not long, as a rule, until a clue here and there to the unfortunate's whereabouts begins to become visible. The records of the steamship lines for an ample stretch of time were searched minutely. One by one the white passengers were accounted for, until the clues narrowed down to half a dozen. Two of these were laboriously traced the length and breadth of Japan, and finally out of the country to Hawaii and Shanghai respectively. In those places the trail was taken up again, and at last both, one in New York, the other in Denver were identified as harmless schoolteachers who had been globetrotting on a half year's leave of absence granted for long and faithful service. And so it went with all but one of the six. Where was she? How had she left Japan, if indeed she had?

The officers of the *Kaga-Maru,* by which it was now definitely established Geraldine must have arrived in Yokohama, were reached by cable in Victoria and ordered to report in detail on their three white passengers. The one they wanted was the unmarried

young woman. Had she been friendly with the missionary and his wife?

This clue was followed to the far north where dwell the hairy Ainu. The red-faced missionary remembered every insulting word the young woman had said to him. She was going out 'to teach.'

After that it was easy. Geraldine's unfortunate fib tricked her, as fibs have an awkward way of doing sooner or later. With unusual sagacity the chief of the high-class spies, an intellectual, educated man, decided to apply a little practical psychology. An unthinking answer, even if untrue, frequently betrays the truth. If Geraldine retorted that she was going out to teach, that probably would be her means of earning a living when she found herself on the rocks, even although she had never consciously thought of teaching as a trade. Her subconscious mind had spoken the truth by means of her flippant, too ready tongue. Unknown to herself she was doomed to be a teacher.

They combed the cities and towns for young American women teachers, and located Miss Forsyth in Yokohama. After raking half the world to find her, they unearthed her at their own front door. It was a painstaking piece of work, almost German in its thoroughness and ultimate efficiency.

At the American end a success even more spectacular was recorded. 'Mr. Smith's' code message to the American Ambassador at Tokyo instructed that gentleman to do three things. The Ambassador was given the necessary information to enable him to carry out the first, which was to trace Geraldine Shortridge as

quickly as possible. The dates of her disappearance from Somerville and of her postal from Yokohama were clues enough for a really efficient detective bureau. Without difficulty the American agents working from Victoria picked up her trail on the *Kaga-Maru*. Then the American agents in Japan, unassuming commercial travellers for the most part, began working from the most natural spot, namely where Geraldine must have landed. Before looking farther afield they decided to comb Yokohama thoroughly. A reproduction of Geraldine's photograph which had appeared on the society page as Mrs. Baker was transmitted by cable to the American Ambassador who passed on photographic copies to his men. Of course one of the first things the Ambassador did when receiving the Secretary's cipher was to get into touch with Boston via Washington, D. C. Geraldine's picture was forthcoming twelve hours after her late neighbors in Somerville feasted their eyes on it.

Armed with these reproductions, the agents set about their task in Yokohama. First they eliminated all American women recorded in telephone and other directories. Then they laid out the city in sections for a systematic search for newcomers. On the first survey they confined themselves to the better class hotels, inquiring incidentally at all shops in their vicinity for Americans. Failing on the first survey they stepped down and combed the second rate hotels. They found Geraldine as 'Miss Forsyth' the first day. Their instructions thereafter were not to let her out of their sight. If she seemed in any danger they were to inter-

fere at once, and the U. S. would stand the consequences.

The Ambassador's second task was in the nature of a smoke screen. He was instructed to call immediately on the highest Japanese authorities and request them to locate the missing girl. The Secretary anticipated the regret which the Japanese authorities expressed some weeks later to the Ambassador that, although they had sought diligently, they had failed to find a trace of the missing girl. The Ambassador thanked them, and promised quite honestly to do the like for them some day. Whether the Japanese police saw through this rather obvious trick is not known. To the end they acted as if they had not. The American agents knew almost at once when the Japanese found Miss Forsyth.

Last, the Ambassador was requested to use all means in his power to prevent Geraldine, if found, from accepting any invitations to garden parties, or any other functions at the Imperial palace. She was to be followed to the very gates before any show of interference was offered, but once her actions made it clear that she was about to enter the sacred precincts, she was to be restrained even at the cost of a riot.

Through all this plotting and counterplotting Geraldine went about her business as innocently as a lamb gambolling past a butcher shop. She was making a rare success of her private lessons in English conversation and reading. The pretty little interpreter had shared in the prosperity. Her salary was now six yen a week, and although she was no longer strictly neces-

sary to her mistress, Geraldine retained her out of affection.

Had Geraldine been of a suspicious nature she might have smelt a rat in the rather sudden rise in her prosperity which began two days before Mr. Smith set foot on Japanese soil. She received four prettily phrased notes in quaint English from the daughters of four of the richest Japanese families in Yokohama. These notes were to the effect that the senders had heard from their friends so much of Miss Forsyth's excellence as a teacher of English that they begged her to give them the benefit of her honorable instruction. Realizing that Miss Forsyth was already 'full up' in the daytime, they would be only too glad to come to her hotel for an hour every evening, and they would each pay double the usual rate. They were all friends, so they would come together if agreeable to Miss Forsyth.

Geraldine saw no reason why she should decline to accommodate these polite young ladies. She gave them their second lesson while Mr. Smith was interviewing the Ambassador's agents at his hotel. When he learned, as he did at once, of Miss Forsyth's sudden prosperity he saw through it at a glance. The young ladies themselves did not know what they were doing, but their fathers did. These loyal gentlemen had been asked by 'higher ups' to send their daughters to Miss Forsyth in order to begin a charming friendship which would rapidly introduce Geraldine to the best people in Yokohama. The best people in Yokahama would introduce her in turn to still better people in Tokyo, where Ger-

aldine would be asked to visit with a view to settling there permanently and conferring on the élite of the capital her unique talents as a teacher of English conversation. The Tokyo friends would make much of her, and present her at Court. Then would follow intimate chats with the very cream of society. It would all be done politely, with no hint of force to make the touchy Americans angry over the mistreatment of a fellow citizen. Forcible abduction and all that sort of thing usually leads to unpleasant scandals.

Mr. Smith decided on immediate action. His agents' reports that the Japanese had already unearthed Miss Forsyth, but for reasons of their own preferred to keep it dark, caused him to suspect that she was even now being questioned. He paid his bill at the expensive hotel, remarking that the tariff was a little too steep for a poor drummer like him, and at once moved to Miss Forsyth's less pretentious inn.

It was eight o'clock in the morning when he registered at the desk. Geraldine, he suspected, was still asleep, so he did not go out to breakfast, but hung about for half an hour. From time to time he surreptitiously studied the copy of the society page picture which he had received from one of the agents. Feeling sure that he would recognize her anywhere, he left the inn and strolled up and down the street till she emerged on her way to breakfast. He went straight to the point.

"Good morning, Miss Shortridge. May I take you to breakfast?"

Geraldine went white.

"You must be mistaken," she said evenly. "My name is Forsyth."

"I know that too," the Secretary laughed. "And to swap confidences, I'll tell you my name isn't Smith, although I'm registered at your inn as George Smith of San Francisco. Let us walk along a bit. I don't want any of these Japs getting too curious. Well, I'm not Smith. Nor am I from San Francisco. I am a member of the President's Cabinet, and I come from Washington, D. C. In fact I am the Secretary of State. I have come all this way just to see you."

"I repeat," Geraldine insisted nervously, "that you are making a mistake."

"Not at all," he replied good-humoredly. "I know exactly what I am doing. Now, I am not going to threaten you. I have not the slightest intention of cabling your parents at 631 Hallowell St., Somerville, Massachusetts, that you are living here under the name of Forsyth. Your reasons for wishing to disappear and to hide from your family are none of my business. But the efficient performance of my job as Secretary of State means a whole lot to me."

Geraldine was almost reeling as he opened the door of the American restaurant for her to enter.

"You live your life as you choose," he resumed when they had found a secluded table. "Whether or not you tell me what I want to know, I shan't persecute you. Incidentally, you might make things pretty hot for me if you were to tell anyone my right name. I am not supposed to be within ten thousand miles of this place."

She could only stare at him in dazed silence. How had he traced her?

"I know what you're thinking," he smiled, after he had ordered a substantial breakfast for two. "You are wondering how on earth I ever found you. To be quite frank, I did not. That job was done by the keenest men of the U. S. secret service, both here and on the other side. They also will hold their tongues."

She swallowed a mouthful of water and appealed to him with agonized eyes.

"Don't tell my father and mother!"

"On my honor, not a word about you shall ever reach them from me or from any of the men who found you. Now, let me put my problem to you as I put it to Jim Blye—whom you have met, I believe. At first he was inclined to be dumb when I questioned him, long before you left Somerville, about this same problem. He loosened up at once when I convinced him that it was up to him as an ordinary decent American to help me out. By the way, I presume you too are a decently loyal citizen, even though you have left the country?"

She nodded.

"Then," he resumed, "I put my life in your hands, so to speak. If you want to give me away, you can. But I know you won't, so here goes. I know all about how you had Okada's gold tooth made into a crown. What I have come all these thousands of miles to learn is, what have you done with that gold tooth?"

"I haven't got it."

"Did you give it to Okada?"

"No."

"Then where is it?"

"How should I know?"

"I see," said the Secretary, not without a note of admiration. "You are not unlike Blye. So you don't believe I'm what I represent myself to be? Is that it? If so, you have me at a loss for the moment. For obvious reasons, if I am what I say I am, it would be unwise to carry a lot of engraved cards proclaiming the fact. Let me ask you a hypothetical question. Suppose I could identify myself as the Secretary of State. Would you tell me then what has become of the gold tooth?"

She looked at him coolly.

"As it is an impossible question," she replied, "I really can't answer it." And she went on with her bacon.

The Secretary laughed delightedly. "I know how you will answer it when the time comes," he said, "so I don't need to worry. I rushed here post-haste to warn you not to answer any questions the Japanese may ask you about that precious tooth. Unless I'm mistaken, you will receive an invitation to a garden party or something of the sort at the palace of a very distinguished person. Be as uncommunicative to him and all of his friends as you have to me, and I'll see that Congress gives you a medal."

"You will leave me in peace, as you promised?" she asked, raising her eyes to his.

"About Somerville, yes. You have my word. But I am afraid it will be necessary for me to start a mild

flirtation with you at the Inn. You needn't mind," he added hastily. "I'm not serious. Or," he flustered, "if that's the wrong way of putting it, I am desperately serious. Take it any way you like; I'm not used to this sort of thing."

"That is obvious," she smiled.

"Is it?" he demanded, somewhat nettled. "Well, I never found anything yet I couldn't learn if they gave me time enough. But for the present, business before pleasure. When you get the time to-day or to-morrow, go to the office of the English paper here, and ask them to show you a picture of the American Ambassador. He will be here in a day or two to identify me. I'll tell you how. Suppose you dine here at seven o'clock the day after to-morrow? He will be here then, but not with me. We shall both happen along from opposite directions as you come out—please don't order an elaborate dinner. You stop him and ask him the name of the man who just passed you, All this may be unnecessary for all I know; but from what has happened so far, I don't think it is. I'm from Missouri. They've got to show me."

The identification proceeded according to the Secretary's schedule. The guests at the Inn noted with sentimental longings that the handsome commercial traveller from San Francisco had fallen hopelessly in love with the pretty teacher of English. The two were always whispering together in dark corners in the most shameless fashion. Mr. Smith had actually been seen holding Miss Forsyth's hand in public. He was learning fast. Miss Forsyth was a skilled teacher, not

only of English, but of the gentle art of flirtation. Their acting was so natural, so spontaneously spoony, that it deceived even the Japanese spies.

As a matter of fact Geraldine and the Secretary were not bandying soft nothings, but earnestly discussing what she should do when the Emperor invited her to the great cherry-blossom garden party. Already the four young Japanese ladies were hinting of Tokyo.

CHAPTER XVII

MAROONED

BLYE became aware that the skin was blistered and peeled from the palms of his hands. His frantic efforts to beat out the flame had only partially succeeded, and he had swarmed the last twenty feet, racing the flame to the top. Shaking like a frightened horse he now beat out the smouldering patches in his clothes with his scorched hands, Then he peered over the edge of the precipice.

Ivanoff was packing up in complete indifference. Though he had failed to bring down his quarry either with shot or with flame, he had effectively marooned him. To the half-breed interpreter his late master was better than dead, for he would suffer from starvation and never again be seen or heard by living man. The rifle and the flour were his, also the two mules and whatever of value might be concealed in the packs. Ivanoff suspected Blye of having hidden his money somewhere in the open pack-frames which the wind had been unable to grip. In this he was mistaken. Blye's valuables were in an oilskin case under his shirt. Without bothering to see whether Blye was observing him, Ivanoff mounted the brown mule and started back over his trail, leading the gray by its halter.

"Well," Dinosaur reflected, turning his back on the scene of his defeat, "Ivanoff is a miserable shot. Before he gets back to Harbin to tell them how I fell into a river and got drowned, he will have some hungry nights. Yet, even at that I'll bet they're nothing to what's ahead of me. Whither away?"

After prudently salvaging what remained of the rope, and coiling it round his waist, he walked rapidly to the top of the dip in order to get a view of the plateau before the light failed completely. Arrived at the crest he scanned the vast flat through his field glasses. As far as he could see from where he stood there was not a sign of human habitation. Only the lush grass, vivid with spring flowers, billowed endlessly in the evening breeze as far as he could see.

At the point where he stood he was about seven miles from the baby cone, the one conspicuous elevation on the whole plateau.

"I can't make it before dark," he muttered, putting up his glasses. "If I can see nothing from the top of that nub I may as well shorten things by taking a jump over the edge. A man can't live on grass.

To keep his mind off unpleasant possibilities he started to wade his way through the tall grass toward the rounded cone. Darkness overtook him before he had made two miles, but he kept on. Action, even the most futile, was better than brooding.

"I'm working up a devil of an appetite," he laughed, "swimming through this grass."

Half an hour later he stumbled over an obstruction in his path. Investigation in the pitch darkness re-

vealed a long line of loosely piled stones, like a fence in a country where wood is scarce.

"Civilization," he said. "Living, dead, or dying? That's the question. Those stones may have been lying there for the past ten thousand years. What is the good of a fence up here any way? There is not a sign of cattle. That fence was built before the earthquakes carved out this plateau. Happy thought."

He retraced his steps to investigate once more. By feeling with his feet—his hands were too sore—he came to the conclusion that this line of stones was merely the outcrop of a long forgotten fence which ages of spring and summer had overgrown. The stones at the base had gradually sunk in the thawed soil, undermined by the persistent roots of the grass, and the wreckage of autumn, piled by the winter storms against the subsiding wall, had all but buried it in the decay of centuries. He felt strangely alone, cut off from the living world in space and time. With an involuntary shudder he hurried from the place forcing his way through the tramelling grasses.

Gradually the grass became less luxuriant. He had struck a belt of poorer soil. The grass was now no higher than his ankles, and he strode along in the starlight with his head up as if he feared nothing on this earth.

A sound that to his startled ears was like a battery going into action suddenly brought him to a paralyzed halt. It was right at his feet, in his very face, in the air all about him. With a nervous laugh at his own fright he realized that he had half scared the life out

of a flock of quail or partridges sleeping in the short grass. He went on, more hopefully. Where there is food there is a way of catching it.

The grass thinned and ended abruptly at the stony margin of what, in the starlight, he took to be one of the small glacial lakes he had seen from the mountain side. The steely blue of the stars was mirrored unbrokenly in those calm waters, although the night breeze still billowed the grass through which he had travelled. Not noticing the strangeness of those unmoving reflections, Blye bent down to drink. He was about to cup his hand when he remembered that cold water on a freshly peeled blister stings like acid. So he bent over the water to drink. To his astonishment his face touched a cold surface as hard and as smooth as glass.

He still had a few matches left in his case. Striking one he examined the surface of the 'lake.' It was not glass, but a fused mass of blue-green slag, like the waste from a smelter. The surface was not perfectly level, as he found by walking on it, but slightly uneven in places as if successive batches of some molten rock had been poured out, one on top of another, at considerable intervals of time.

"More civilization," he said, "and this time certainly dead—dead for ten thousand years. The people who knew this much about smelting ores wouldn't be tree'd by the minor difficulty of getting off this table-land after the earthquakes marooned them. What's a two- or three-hundred-foot ladder? They left in a body, provided any of them survived the big smash."

His next halt, three quarters of an hour later, revised his theory, and he felt less lonely. This time he pitched headlong over some obstacle he might easily have missed seeing in broad daylight. A plaintive 'cheep' to his left told him that he had blundered into a cunning trap to snare birds.

"Whoever made this infernal thing," he muttered when finally he got himself free of the ingenious meshes, "obviously doesn't want to escape from here. Grass string, I suspect. If string, why not a two-hundred-foot rope? They like it up here, and are determined to stay. I wonder, though, if one or two of the radicals among them didn't run away? That would account for all that queer stuff the Jesuits put into their editions of *De re metallica*. I've come to the right spot. Good boy, Dinosaur. Now, to be fresh for my friends the bird catchers in the morning."

He walked on till he found tall grass again. Then he took off his coat, pulled it over his head, curled up and went to sleep. There were no cosy blowholes on top of the plateau as there had been on the volcanic plain all about its base, so Dinosaur spent a rather fitful seven hours before the sun rose to warm his chilled back.

On rising, hungry as a starved bear, he noted first that he had wandered far from his objective. In the dark he had circled to the south of the volcanic nub, instead of bearing toward it as he supposed.

The hour was still early. Workers, if there were any on this wide plateau, would not yet be coming to their day's labor. Blye wondered whether they had

slept, as he had, under the icy stars with no bed clothes worth mentioning. If so, they must be a hardy lot. Taking out his glasses he searched every square inch of the plateau within range for signs of animal life, human or otherwise. He could discover nothing bigger than a Chinese pheasant.

Birds of many kinds, all tantalizingly appetizing in the sharp morning air, flew over the plateau in great flocks, or whirred down to feed hurriedly on the abundant grass seeds. Blye was almost tempted to retrace his steps to the snare and despatch the unhappy prisoner for his breakfast. He still had a few matches, Dry grass for a fire could be collected somehow from the ruins of last winter. He desisted however for a very sensible reason. Sooner or later the man or men who had set the snare must appear to learn whether they had caught anything. They probably made their rounds at least once a week, otherwise the snared birds would be unfit for food when found. Hoping that this might prove to be a morning of inspection, Dinosaur decided to wait within a mile of the snare till noon. Then, if no one appeared, he would resume his explorations.

Walking back over what he judged to be his previous direction, he sat down where the grass was just high enough to reach his face, and whiled away the tedious wait by a minute scrutiny of the surrounding mountains. The air was still crystal clear, although the pearly mists had already begun to envelop the highest cones and serpent-toothed pinnacles, slowly fingering their way down to the floor of the amphitheatre. The volcano to the west had now practically ceased erupt-

ing. Only an indeterminate blur of steam about its top remained of all its recent fury. The other active cones might still be smouldering beneath their cloud-capped summits. The mists had already shrouded whatever smudge of black might remain beneath the impenetrable sheen of silver.

Hour after hour, forgetful of his hunger, Blye lost himself in the wonder and strange beauty of the place. The blaze of colors on the lower levels of the mountains, not yet touched by the descending mists, as brilliant as jewels in the full morning sun, changed like the pure hues in the spray from a mighty waterfall as the sun crept up the heavens. The deep sapphire of the early morning gradually lightened and passed into pure azure, the purples became lavenders and lilacs; the emerald greens and the rich, copper rust of the malachite cliffs blended where they met in the mellowing light into a deep crysoprase; the startling yellows leapt out in pure gold, and the sombre crimson of the cinnabar ledges brightened and flashed like cliffs of ruby in the sunlight. Overhead, half a mile above the lush spring grass in which the watcher waited, a Chinese lark sang bravely, its far, faint song filtering down like the memory of music in a dream. Small wonder that the people who found themselves marooned on this island of rock in a volcanic sea had never sought to end their isolation. Why should they? Where in all the mountains of the world would they come upon its like again?

Searching the opposite cliffs with his glasses, Blye was not surprised when he made out, approximately

at his own level, a small glacial 'lake' the color of a turquoise, on a slope which ended abruptly in a precipice of cinnabar. Diligent search revealed a dozen or more shattered fragments of these glistening sheets of 'water' that had run, no one knew how many thousands of years ago, only when it flowed white hot from the smelters.

It was idle to speculate now how the first great metallurgists had reduced their ores. Blye was more interested in trying to guess what mineral it was that had spurred them from barbarism to civilization. Their means of roasting out whatever that blue slag had once contained were most likely simple enough, and as primitive, could they be but guessed, as the ancient Egyptians' way of performing incredible miracles in stone.

Blye ran over in his mind all that ten years of geology had taught him. What ore yielded a slag of that peculiar color? The stuff itself must be semi-precious, Blye imagined, yet he could not place it.

"Something new," he muttered, "or rather very old. The rock that contained that mineral must have been thrust up from the inner shell of the Earth. It would take just such a lively spot as this to fetch it up. With all these volcanoes going at once the inner crust, clear down to the bottom of ancient things in general, must have shaken like a jelly. Some of the stuff, whatever it is, got broken off, pinched together like a piece of crumpled paper in the universal smash-up, and was thrust clear up through the old skin of the Earth. That's where those cliffs and mountains came from,

pocketed with a mineral that doesn't grow in young rocks. It takes time to make a work of art, but eternity to create a work of nature. Compared to our common iron, gold, tin and the rest, that are slapped together in an age or two, as we reckon time, the making of that mineral in the blue slag must have taken all eternity. I'll bet the metal those old fellows smelted out of their pre-archæan rocks was heavier than gold, platinum, mercury, uranium—anything we know. And as for its age, it must have been old a million years before they stumbled across it. What did they do with all the metal they roasted out of the rocks? There must have been hundreds of these blue lakes on the floor of this amphitheatre before the big earthquake smashed it all to bits and left this plateau high and dry in midair. Why did they burrow all those mountains like a lot of industrious moles? The stuff was valuable, and it was as rare to them as radium is to us—probably much rarer. What could make it so valuable? What would a primitive people's idea of value be?"

His speculations were interrupted by a rustling in the grass about a hundred yards behind him. Cautiously peering over in the direction of the sound, he saw a rapid ripple pass in a graceful curve through the grass, hesitate, and then come directly toward him,

Dinosaur rose in a panic and fled toward the baby cone. Hunger had sharpened his imagination, and he now saw himself being pursued by some gigantic snake, possibly a venomous and vicious survival from a prehistoric fauna. The brute's ancestors had been

marooned when the floor of the valley sank. All its remote cousins perished in the great earthquake, but the reptile's forefathers—it was a dragon now as he heard it gaining on him—had survived on the top of this hard, safe plateau to propagate their kind. It was almost up with him when he tripped and fell.

A warm breath fanned his cheek, a moist lip caressed his ear, and he woke from his stupor to find a friendly brown dog licking his face. In thankfulness at his merciful delivery he embraced the dog and promptly christened him Jonah in memory of Ivanoff's whale. He was truly relieved not to find himself slowly digesting inside some monstrous reptile.

Jonah was a remarkable dog. His hair was thick and bristly like a scrubbing brush; there were fur muffs above both of his front paws, but none at the back; his tail boasted a protuberance like a mop at its tip, and his wrinkled, all but hairless face bore the wistful, dejected expression which Dicky Doyle immortalized in his portrait of Punch's 'Dog Toby.' It was obvious that the poor dog was trying to look like a magnificent brown lion but couldn't quite make it. He was frankly delighted with Dinosaur, especially with his rather soiled clothes. Blye was as delighted as Jonah, partly for his own sake, partly because a friendly dog foretells a welcome and a friendly master.

For the moment Blye abandoned speculation as to what breed Jonah might be, for the dog seemed anxious to be on his way. Blye followed his long serpent-like lead through the grass. But Jonah certainly was a queer dog. He might have been a complicated cross

between a French poodle and a Chinese chow, a British bull, and a hairless Mexican, and yet there was an air about him that said as plainly as could any certified pedigree that he was no mongrel. As he raced before his new-found friend Blye vaguely classified him as somewhere between the archæan and the paleozoic. Jonah was a survival, but of what, it was difficult to say.

The dog raced directly for the small volcanic cone, Blye following as fast as he could. Probably, he reasoned, there was a house of some sort on the farther side. But Jonah kept right on up the slope as if he knew exactly where he was going. The pace was so stiff that Blye barely noted the change in the character of the grass. It was no longer rank and wild, but evidently cultivated. The crop was unfamiliar to him, but he guessed that it was a kind of millet, not unlike that grown in Manchuria. Here and there a small patch of scarlet flax arrested his eyes with its vivid flame, evidently a volunteer from a previous year's crop. So the dog's master was civilized in at least a primitive way.

To Blye's surprise Jonah made straight for the lip of the extinct crater, dwindled for two or three seconds, and finally disappeared completely over the rim. An excited barking announced that Jonah was spreading the great news. Blye resolved to await developments. He sat down beside a clump of flax to see who or what would come over the rim of the crater.

He did not wait long. Within five minutes Jonah's head reappeared. There was an agonized succession of

barks and yelps, and Jonah's head vanished. He had run back to reassure his doubting master that he really had brought home something of value. The barks subsided and stopped, the head reappeared, followed instantly by the whole of Jonah, and Blye stood up to learn his fate.

A tall, lithe figure, clad in a short, sleeveless, white smock, strode over the rim. At the first glance Blye saw that it was a young woman. Whatever made him do what he now did he has never been able to explain. Some instinct impelled him to clutch a handful of the scarlet flax blossoms and advance to meet the young woman, holding out his nosegay as a peace offering. She had hesitated either from alarm or astonishment on first seeing what Jonah had found, glancing back at the lip of the crater as if meditating flight. Her natural courage or her feminine curiosity overcame her fears, however, and she walked directly down the slope to meet this strange visitor.

Jonah was leaping up at Blye's fascinating clothes when the young woman stopped to inspect, not twenty feet away. For perhaps a quarter of a minute Blye and she stood silently looking into each other's faces. What she thought of him, with five days' beard on his tanned face, is not known, for as Blye afterwards discovered, the men of her own people were practically beardless.

He thought her a remarkably handsome young woman, and a perfect statue of rugged health. Her features were almost Caucasian, or at least Aryan,

with not a trace of the Mongol's slanting eyes and flattened nostrils. The face, however, with its delicately arched eyebrows and firm moulding was not European. If anything it recalled that of a high-caste young East Indian woman. The forehead was full, and the head well shaped. Her hair, neatly dressed, was as black and as glossy as that of a Japanese girl. The skin was olive rather than brown, with a faint touch of real carmine on the cheeks.

Seeing that she did not run, Blye boldly advanced, holding out his handful of scarlet flax. To his surprise she came forward to meet him. For the first time, he noticed her shoes. Her legs were bare from the middle thigh down. On her shapely feet were a pair of openwork shoes. The upper parts seemed to be made of a sort of coarse netting of the richest cloth of gold.

Before he knew how it happened she was holding the flax, and Jonah was encircling them in a streak, mad with joy at the success of his introduction

She stared into Blye's face as if he were a walking dream. Blye tried to speak and found himself tongue tied. She was his own height, possibly half an inch taller. This was no savage, no half-civilized Tartar, Mongol, or Manchu; but a fully developed human being with a native intelligence probably the equal of his own. He could only stare at her clothes in an agony of embarrassment. Her smock seemed to be made of homespun linen, coarse in texture. The undergarment which half covered her legs was also of white

linen, but of a finer weave. From a scarlet ribbon about her neck some invisible ornament or charm hung beneath her smock.

Blye realized that she was speaking. Pointing to the sky she uttered certain words in a soft, musical tongue, rich in vowels, of which, naturally, he recognized not a single syllable. Nevertheless he understood her question. She was asking him whether he had fallen out of the sky.

The question was not as foolish as it sounds. Although doubtless she and all her people understood well enough how it might be possible to get down a precipice without the breaking of bones, she quite rightly failed to see how a solitary man with nothing in his hands and only a coil of twenty feet of rope round his middle, had contradicted gravity and climbed up. Blye was the first in all remembered history who had done this impossible thing.

A nod or a shake of the head is understood immediately in all languages. The diplomatic possibilities opened up by the young woman's question were sufficiently tempting. Blye chose the better part of wisdom and told the truth. Shaking his head emphatically he pointed to the ground. People as intelligent as this girl's face said she was would have given the lie to any messenger-from-Heaven invention before nightfall. Then, if they disliked divine liars, they might have pitched him over the cliff, just to see whether he was as clever at flying up as he had claimed to be in flying down.

To his surprise this perfectly truthful account met

with her vehement disapproval. Talking excitedly she pointed back to the rim of the crater, then to the ground, and shook her head vigorously. Blye could make nothing of what she was trying to tell him, so he repeated his own pantomime. She replied as before. Finally in desperation Blye pointed to the far edge of the plateau and went through a lifelike act of a man swarming up a rope.

At last she seemed to comprehend, although not fully. All she understood probably was that this man had somehow scaled the precipice. She had followed his acting with the closest attention, Blye noticed. He thought she was getting the full meaning. As a matter of fact she was more interested in looking at his blistered and bleeding hands. When he finished his act she stepped to his side, took his right hand in hers, and examined it minutely. Then she bent swiftly down to deposit her scarlet flax before proceeding to the next move.

Blye was so interested in seeing what she was about that he failed to get whatever thrill the ordinary young man might experience under similar conditions. The girl was beautiful, strikingly so in an exotic way, and she was holding his right hand gently in her own. But what did she mean by it? That was what interested Blye.

He actually shouted, startling her, when she drew from her bosom the thing at the end of the scarlet ribbon about her neck.

"The gold tooth," he exulted, forgetting her completely.

But it was not a gold tooth, as Blye saw at the first glance. Yet it was something just as good, for the girl's intention was now perfectly obvious. At the end of the scarlet ribbon was a beautifully formed image of a turtle about the size of a dollar, all in the palest of pale yellow gold. This was her medicine, her charm, and it was at least a key to the thing Blye had come thousands of miles to see. It was not, he thought, the treasure in the chest, although it might prove a key to unlock the chest.

Scarcely realizing what she did, he let her put the turtle on the palm of his right hand, close the left palm over it, and then hold both his hands firmly between her own.

Either Blye's imagination was not strong enough or the pale gold turtle was not the proper medicine for burned hands. Rather skeptically he expected to receive no benefit from the rite, and therefore quite naturally derived none, for the time being at least. During the ten minutes more or less that the treatment lasted, Blye enjoyed himself studying his companion. She, for her own part, seemed wholly absorbed in her doctoring. The stranger within her gates was merely a patient, nothing more. Had the festive Jonah cut his tufted paws on a sharp rock she would have shown him precisely the same consideration.

This young woman, Blye now noted in detail, was beautifully made. Among her many attractive features her appearance of perfect, almost startling health at once arrested the attention. She would have taken first prize easily in any competition of the Western world,

or of the Eastern for that matter, on physical condition. From her complete fearlessness before a totally unexpected stranger he inferred that her mind was as healthy as her body. Altogether, he concluded, she was a most desirable young woman.

When the supposed cure was finally effected, she released his hands. Blye watched her next move with interest. Would she have enough surgical sense not to restore the pale gold turtle, now perhaps contaminated, to a place where it might come in contact with her own skin? She had. The charm was left dangling down the front of her smock at the end of its long scarlet ribbon. It did not follow of course that she knew any scientific reason for what she did. Like any primitive physicians her people had accumulated by experience a workable set of taboos, learning through the painful observation of centuries what should be called unclean. Blye waited for her to make the next move.

She picked up her scarlet flax, called Jonah by a sound that Blye tried vainly to imitate and, to her late patient's surprise, made off rapidly away from the crater. He had expected her to return whither she had come. Instead she seemed bent on traversing the route he had blundered along during the night. Uncertain whether she wished his company, he stood where she had left him. Presently she turned, saw him still standing, and beckoned for him to follow.

Jonah guided them by a fairly direct route to the bird nets. Here the young woman deftly repaired the damage done by Blye when he stumbled over the net

in the dark, examined three birds struggling in the meshes, decided that they were either too small or not palatable, and set them free.

Standing then as straight as an arrow she shaded her eyes with one hand and looked steadily toward the little 'lake' of blue slag from which Blye had tried to drink. For what was she looking? Dinosaur got out his glasses, adjusted them to his own range of vision, and motioned her to use them. Rather doubtfully, but quite unafraid, she put them to her eyes as he seemed to wish, only to drop them in astonishment. Luckily Blye had hold of the strap.

Talking excitedly she pointed to the glasses, eager to try again. Whatever might be the degree of her education, she was proving herself teachable and thirsting to learn. There was none of the timorous savage about this splendid young woman. Mere novelty did not spell devil to her as it does to most untutored folk. Blye trusted her with the glasses and showed her how to change the focus. Presently she got them just right. For half an hour she revelled in the new world which this marvel revealed, studying in minute detail the beauty of the mountains, her familiar friends, which till this moment she had never known intimately. As an adventurous girl she must have longed to explore the maze of many colors all about her, so near yet so inaccessible, and now she was gratifying her ambition. At last she turned her gaze back to the shining blue 'lake,' distant about two miles from where they stood. Finding what she sought, she re-

luctantly parted with the new magic and yielded Blye up his glasses.

He was quick to note the profound impression this simple scientific instrument had made on his companion, also her evident desire to possess the treasure. By signs he indicated that he would gladly barter it for the small turtle of pale gold dangling on her smock.

She understood. Weighing her 'medicine' in one shapely hand she looked longingly at the glasses, then at the gold turtle. For a moment she seemed tempted to part with her own treasure. Strict training however got the better of her impulse, and she sadly shook her head.

"All right," Blye laughed. "I get the point. You have been taught since you were no taller than an ant not to lose your medicine or give it away for anything, even all those mountains over there. Please accept this trifle as a free gift from your humble admirer, Dinosaur."

Although she failed to get the drift of his remarks, his actions as he pressed the glasses upon her spoke plainly enough. This visitor from another world was begging her to take what must be his most precious possession. At first she shook her head, vigorously. Then, as he insisted, her denial became less emphatic. Finally she succumbed and accepted the gift with a smile that repaid the donor a thousand times. He had made a friend for life. To set her mind at ease about accepting the present, he pointed to her gold turtle,

then exhibited the palms of his hands, indicating that the gift of the glasses was merely fair payment for all the good she had done him.

To his intense surprise he noticed that the blisters and raw places had ceased smarting. Till this moment he had been so interested in watching his companion that he had not thought about his painful burns. They no longer tingled. In fact they felt quite normal.

"Sterilized?" he muttered, staring at them in astonishment.

She understood his bewilderment and dangled the gold turtle for him to inspect if he wished. Blye did so, minutely, but could discover nothing more than what the beautifully made image purported to be.

"There's something in it after all," he muttered. "This must be the origin, somehow or another, of the legend—or fact—that the Toothstone does cure toothache. I'm right after all."

She was off again, following Jonah through the shorter grass to the gleaming slag. Every now and then she halted for a moment to enjoy her new treasure, her face the picture of sheer delight. Once she reached out her hand as if to touch someone before her, and laughed when she realized that it was merely the new magic which she saw and not the solid reality. Handing Blye the glasses, she motioned him to look slightly beyond the shining slag. Through the glasses he saw four men planting seed.

CHAPTER XVIII

GETTING ACQUAINTED

BEFORE they came up to the four planters of seed, Dinosaur had named his charming companion. As she was the first woman he had seen on the plateau he not inappropriately called her Eve. For some minutes he hesitated between Eve and Dawn, but decided that the latter was too poetical. Moreover he did not yet know what the young woman intended doing with him. Dawn would hardly suit a girl who orders you thrown over a precipice.

The four men were as friendly in a frank way as Eve after she had explained the situation in liquid vowels. Their principal curiosity centered in Blye's clothes. Why any active man should swathe himself like a mummified cat passed their understanding. They themselves were clad in approximately the same garb as Eve's, except that their smocks were shorter, reaching only to the waist. Their clothes also were white, like a Korean gentleman's.

Blye indicated that he was thirsty. One of the men at once went in search of the water jug where he had concealed it in a patch of tall grass to keep it cool. When that flashing jug appeared, Blye's eyes bulged. It was a long gourd-shaped bottle of ruddy gold, as

red as an orange. Unaware of their guest's astonishment they offered him the heavy jug of pure gold as if it were nothing more than a cheap glass demijohn in a wicker basket. Dinosaur drank his fill as if he had been used to gold plate all his life. Then he did rather a rash thing for so cautious a young man.

The gold of the water container was red; that of Eve's medicine the palest yellow. Blye wished to compare them more closely. Reaching for Eve's dangling charm he held it against the side of the jug. The difference between the two metals was striking. Beside the orange of the bottle the gold of the turtle looked as pale as a lemon.

The men formed a curious ring around Blye and Eve. For the first time he noticed a cloud of doubt on their friendly faces. Eve, seeming to guess what was in the stranger's mind, touched the jug, then the turtle, and slowly shook her head. As plainly as if she had spoken she told him what he suspected. The two metals were radically different. Her turtle was not gold.

Blye indicated that he would like to examine the medicine of the men. They shook their heads, involuntarily clutching the scarlet cords about their necks. It was evident that they began to distrust him. The ring widened and they slowly withdrew, leaving him alone with Eve. Gently she claimed her turtle, took the water bottle, and thoroughly washed her 'medicine.' Then she slipped it inside her smock and left Blye, to converse in whispers with the four men.

"You may as well speak out," Blye laughed. "I

can't understand the first letter of your beautiful alphabet."

The consultation lasted long. Finally two of the men approached and signified that he was to follow them. Blye did so cheerfully, confident that he could take care of himself if the pair proposed a walk to the far edge of the plateau. Murder however was not their intention. When they reached a tall billow of grass, well out of sight of Eve, they motioned him to take off his coat. He complied. The two men looked at one another in surprise. The stranger actually wore two smocks. What a freak! They signed for him to remove his thick flannel shirt. Blye obliged them. Their astonishment now threatened to exceed the bounds of courtesy. Was the man made of clothes? Blye took off his heavy undershirt. They seemed quite disappointed.

Only a small rectangular bag remained, slung by a cord round Blye's neck. This, which contained bank drafts and valuable papers, at once excited their pleased attention. It was all right after all, their smiles seemed to say. The man was civilized like themselves, and not an incomprehensible barbarian with no knowledge of the one science, medicine. One of the men eagerly felt the oilskin packet, his face growing more and more puzzled. To oblige them Blye opened the case and exhibited its contents.

Their disappointment was obvious. More doubtfully than ever they anxiously scanned their visitor's face. By a flash of intuition, lighting up suddenly the meaning of many vague hints in the Jesuit writings, Blye

guessed the source of the men's perplexity. The only human beings whom they had ever seen all wore the sacred metal. To lack a talisman of the pale yellow 'medicine' was to be but part human. How could one live and be healthy without it? A beneficial discovery, undoubtedly of great value for certain ailments, had been magnified by the long lapse of centuries into a panacea. If it helped one kind of sickness it must help all. The reasoning was thoroughly unscientific, and therefore as thoroughly human. It was just the sort of generalization a people without true scientific instincts might be expected to reach. Their great discovery, as Blye had already supposed, had been nothing but a sheer, primitive accident. And generation after generation of them had strengthened the great initial fallacy, that which is good once is good always and for all ills.

While Blye dressed himself, the men questioned him closely by pointing to the ground, the volcanic nub, and the distant boundaries of the plateau as to the route by which he had arrived. Eve's simple report evidently needed confirmation now that they knew he had no turtle. To all their questions Blye persisted in replying to the best of his ability by gesticulating the plain truth.

It was beginning to dawn upon him that there might be a back door, as it were, to the plateau. These marooned turtle-worshippers were a civilized people of no mean intelligence. They might have escaped ages since from their splendid isolation had they so wished. Not only the obvious way down the precipices by

means of ropes, which they could spin by the mile if they liked, offered itself; but evidently, as their repeated queries concerning Blye's particular route from below indicated, some easier way of ingress was well known to the plateau dwellers. But they did not wish to escape. They were too proud, or too happy, to run away.

A second obvious inference from their search of his person and their subsequent disappointment on finding nothing, followed as naturally as breathing. In some way that was not yet clear they had expected Blye to be one of themselves, or at least not lacking in the first pre-requisite of a decent human being. Had he possessed a turtle they would have welcomed him with open arms as a rational, civilized mortal like themselves. His lack of the first evidence of culture made him an object of suspicion, if not of pity and contempt. He might not have spoken their language, still he would have been a son of their common mother, in fact a returned prodigal and therefore doubly welcome. But, as it was, he probably stood about as high in their estimation as a mud-eating Igorote would in ours.

The upshot of Blye's cogitations as he buttoned up his shirt were two very practical but forlorn hopes. First he humbly tendered his gold hunting watch in lieu of a turtle. It was examined respectfully and declined. One of the men replied by the vivid pantomime of drinking from a heavy jug that the watch was merely so much worthless gold. Abashed, Blye restored it to his pocket. Then he gambled on the

reputation of Okada's gold tooth. Opening his mouth wide he pointed to the lone gold crown he boasted, far back and decently out of sight unless he yawned too openly. This seemed to interest them. Talking excitedly they peered at the tooth. It was of lighter gold than the watch, but they shook their heads in disappointment. One of the men whipped out his turtle from beneath his smock and compared its color with that of the crown. A mere glance sufficed. Like the watch it was only gold after all. What could any rational being want with such rubbish in his mouth? It passed their comprehension.

"Well," said Blye, "I hope Miss Shortridge delivered Okada's gold tooth safely. Otherwise he won't learn very much when he arrives, and I'll go home as ignorant as I am now. By the way," he asked, addressing the men, "does either of you fellows have a spare duck, or a roast turkey, or anything of that sort about you? If so, I'll show you how to use a gold tooth. I'm hungry." Suiting action to his words he easily conveyed what he wanted.

They responded instantly. Although this man was none of theirs, they would gladly feed him, clothe him less absurdly, and even make a pet of him, like the tufted Jonah. He might not be fit to worship the turtle, yet he would be decently treated so long as he behaved himself and worked for his board when asked.

It did not seem to have occurred to them that Blye could possibly intend dishonesty or violence. They were a gentle race, truly civilized, with so much gold that to steal was useless, and with so much common

sense that killing each other seemed not criminal but silly. If they were tempted to steal it might be a broiled pheasant, or a bag of millet that roused their passing cupidity. But even thefts such as these were scarcely worth while where everyone worked enough to keep in good health, and so had plenty to eat. In short they seemed to have reduced the art or the burden of living to its lowest common denominator. There were few of them on that wide plateau, so they could afford to be dainty about their felonies.

The two men turned over this barbarian to Eve and Jonah with the evident information that he was to be fed. They also explained in detail that he lacked a turtle. For a moment Eve looked quite sad. He was such a friendly young man, giving her scarlet flax and a magic pair of eyes, it really was too bad he was uncivilized. However, she made the best of things, and beckoned him to follow her. Blye boldly stepped to her side, and they set off together to the lake of blue slag.

When the sad-faced Jonah saw where his mistress was going he cheered up considerably and raced ahead, streaking across the blue surface as if he knew it was dinner time. Whenever Eve passed the pantry or the storeroom Jonah dined. The dog dwindled in the distance until suddenly, about half way across the gleaming blue, he vanished. Blye thought hunger had made him light-headed. Eve was swinging along beside him as if it were natural for dogs to vanish on the blue slag. Dinosaur decided to ignore the incident. He glanced at Eve. She also was taking no notice of the

miracle. When he looked again at the spot where the dog had dematerialized himself he saw the tufted Jonah racing joyously to meet them. It was almost too much for his nerves, and he rather shrank from the dog's caresses.

Presently the obvious explanation of Jonah's magic came into view. A broad tunnel sloped up from the rocks below, debouching at a point almost exactly in the centre of the 'lake.' This, Blye supposed must have been one of the tunnels by which the ancient miners had hauled up their ore to the smelter. But if so, why had not the molten slag choked the exit? The explanation was simple. The exit of the tunnel was cased in solid copper, one of the first of all metals to be effectively worked by primitive peoples, and the casing had evidently been raised by successive stages so as always to form a dam against the melted blue glass. Stone steps, sheathed in the remains of what once had been thick copper sheeting, ages since worn completely through to the harder stone, itself cupped by the passage of countless feet, led from the copper barrier at the surface of the slag down to the tunnel proper in the solid rock.

As if it were the most natural thing in the world to descend to the bowels of the earth to dine, Eve followed the yelping Jonah down the stone steps. Dinosaur took it all as a matter of course. If Eve saw nothing strange, it was all right with him. The first fifty feet of the tunnel sloped gently, and the diffused daylight from the exit was sufficient to show them the way. The succeeding three hundred feet dipped abruptly at an

angle of forty-five degrees through total darkness. Then followed a perfectly level stretch, also as black as night, of about forty feet, evidently a resting stage where the ancient miners transferred their ores before the last steep haul to the top, for this stage was followed by another sharp dip in a direction at right angles to the first. The floors of these dips were conveniently uneven, so it was easy to descend rapidly, but not too quickly, without slipping. From the regular spacing of the ridges in the floors, Blye guessed that they were the remains of stone steps worn down by the continual dragging up of heavy baskets of ore. Those primitive metallurgists must have been an energetic lot.

One aspect of their rapid descent through the darkness impressed Blye strongly. He had made it clear enough to Eve that he coveted her 'medicine'—the metal turtle. Although she was athletic and evidently remarkably strong for a young woman, she was after all only a girl, and no match for a muscular man like Blye. And yet here she was, totally unsuspicious, leading her unknown visitor down a dark tunnel. At any moment he might have overpowered her and robbed her of her treasure. Blye was touched by her innocence, and vowed that if he could not get hold of a piece of that priceless metal by fair means he would not resort to foul. Had these people proved churlish and cynical it would have been easy to justify rough strategy. Sooner or later they must have given good grounds for attack. But, being what they were, the very absurdity of their confiding trust in a stranger

of wholly unknown character was their strongest protection. Dinosaur in spite of himself was put strictly on his best behavior.

They were now walking rapidly down a long corridor which, Blye judged from the time of their descent, must be slightly below the level of the floor of the amphitheatre surrounding the plateau. Eve relinquished his hand, not from a sudden access of false modesty, but because a dim blue phosphorescence now began to quiver through the darkness. This bluish glow could hardly be called an illumination; it was more like the 'smoke' from a lump of phosphorus in a dark room, except that its color was distinctly blue. It came and went in irregular pulsations, wisps of semi-light and broken rings, like the smoke from a smouldering fire when the air is just stirring into motion. With every minute of their advance down the long, level passageway the darkness diminished, until presently the black rock of the walls became plainly visible through the blue haze. Eve turned a corner, and Blye saw the strange source of the illumination.

The new corridor in which they found themselves was roughly rectangular in cross section, although no attempt had been made to dress either the solid rock walls or the ceiling, and fully forty feet wide. This evidently was one level of an ancient mine. Along either wall, at a uniform height of about five feet from the floor, ran a band of what at first seemed to be thick glass set into the walls. This glass band, if it was indeed glass, was of a uniform breadth, which Blye judged to be about fifteen inches. At irregular

intervals, as far as the eye could follow, appeared behind these glass bands the amazing sources of the blue lights. Possibly half a mile from where they now walked the long corridor swerved gradually to the left, still lit by the natural lamps behind the bands, so Blye was unable to guess how far the illuminated blue line continued into the heart of the rock.

He stopped in astonishment before one of the natural lamps. It was nothing, apparently, but a pocket, about a foot in diameter, hollowed out from the living rock. The interior of this pocket, behind the glass, seethed with blue light as if the inside of the cavity had been smeared with a highly luminous paint. Only the rock itself glowed; the air in the pocket seemed normal. The occluded air however may only have appeared cold and lifeless by contrast with the excessive brilliance of the blue background.

Examining the wall behind the glass bands between successive pockets of light, Blye detected there also a blue glow. Behind the glass a rich ledge of some unknown mineral, about thirteen inches in thickness, ran in an unbroken line the length of the corridor.

Blye forgot Eve and everything but the amazing puzzle of those coruscating pockets of light and the dim, smoky band of blue phosphorescence connecting them. She stood patiently while he passed from pocket to pocket testing the glass, examining the manner by which it was fixed to the solid rock of the walls, and vainly trying to imagine what mineral could emit such a light continuously. Amid so much that was inexplicable at a first glance the fastening of the glass band

excited only a momentary astonishment. At intervals of about a yard the segments of the glass were firmly attached to the wall by solid gold pegs driven into holes drilled in the rock and then bent up or down, as the case might be, for half an inch over the glass to hold it snugly against the wall. Only the rock immediately behind the band, and therefore along the precious vein of ore, had been carefully smoothed; the rest of the walls were left rough-hewn.

The first clue to the nature of the precious metal which had been extracted from those glowing pockets was furnished by the appearance of the undressed rock surrounding each. For a distance of fully three feet from the centre of each pocket, a series of concentric rings like the ripples on a pond when a stone is thrown in, spread over the rough surface of the rock in a series of multicolored, circular stains, The succession of colors in these haloes around each pocket was invariable; near the glowing pocket itself the rock had turned bright yellow in a succession of well-defined rings; the yellow circles were followed by a band of sharp orange rings, the whole about a foot in breadth, and finally the outer band of concentric rings rapidly shaded from deep brown to fawn, to disappear completely about a yard from the centre. These, on a gigantic scale, were not unlike the tiny haloes left by the age-long decay of radioactive elements in old rocks. But they were not due to any such element commonly known, as Blye recognized at a glance. He had sectioned too many rocks to be deceived by any false explanation.

The evidence furnished by the faintly glowing stretches of the ledge between pockets was even more suggestive. Although the metal had burned itself out in these sections of the ledge ages before the first great metallurgists started burrowing in the solid rock, it had left its indelible signature in the very act of eternal extinction. Here the yellow and brown haloes had reached their full growth. The concentric circles expanded in an ever-widening ring clear to the roof of the tunnel some four feet from the top of the ledge and disappeared, still vividly marked, beneath the floor. These older haloes often encircled the younger ones, not yet completed, which still gave glowing evidence of the precious metal which they had yielded up, before it burned itself out, to the forgotten miners of long ago.

What had they done with all that metal? Did it still shine like the midday sun in some secret cavern of the mountains? Or had they dissipated their treasure in pretty trifles, now hopelessly lost, or squandered it in futile incantations? What use, if any, had they made of it? Did each of these pockets yield much or little of the priceless stuff, a handful or barely enough to cover the head of a pin? Did the still glowing core of these haloes represent the real matrix of the precious deposit, or had those crude miners hacked out the whole heart of the rock in order to get at its essence? These, and a score of similar questions, Blye asked himself to little purpose. The place was a riddle, but not an unanswerable one. He longed for a chance to

examine Eve's turtle in the dark, but for the moment could think of no plan for doing so.

At least one of his questions was partially answered before they had proceeded a hundred yards down the tunnel. By accident or design the glass band had been removed, possibly broken, on one side of the tunnel for a distance of about a hundred feet. This section of the wall was without the faintest trace of phosphorescence. It was dead, although at least twenty black pockets marked the course of the unbroken ledge. Whatever it might be that caused those pockets to glow could escape through air. The state of the haloes surrounding these dead pockets showed conclusively that they were still vigorous when the glass in front of them was broken. Not one had reached the dimensions of the haloes round the pockets which still blazed. From that fact Blye hoped, if he lived long enough, to form an estimate of the date at which the glass was removed, and so set a limit to the antiquity of the whole mine.

His immediate speculations were somewhat rudely interrupted by Jonah. For the past five minutes Blye had clean forgotten Eve, who had now sent the sad-faced, joyous Jonah to bring the starving stranger to dinner.

"All right, Jonah," Blye said, pulling his whiskers. "I'll be along in a minute. Tell Eve I'm trying to figure out what this glass really is. It isn't glass; it's more like high grade slag. How did those old miners cut it so neatly? It isn't well made, but it does let through the light."

Jonah conducted his friend down the tunnel till they turned the curve, when he darted off unexpectedly to the left. The line of blue lights abruptly terminated a few yards beyond the spot where Jonah turned, although the tunnel, Blye noticed, continued some distance farther in comparative darkness. The primitive miners, he inferred, had lost the ledge at this point, or it had petered out like a rich vein in a gold mine.

On turning to the left Blye found himself in a large, well lighted rectangular room hewn out of the living rock. This room was not exactly laid out in a rectangle, nor were its walls unbroken, for the miners had burrowed here and there, following the clue of discolored haloes to pockets of the hidden metal, and in several instances they had tunnelled apparently at random in attempts to discover whether the vein actually did end as it seemed to do in this nest of pockets, or whether it merely changed direction. The still living pockets, void of their precious metal, were covered with fused slag like those of the corridor. The burned-out holes had been enlarged, and were now used as small cupboards.

For the first time Blye became aware of the faint but unmistakable reek of volcanic activity. Somewhere along those dark passages there must be hot springs and possibly crevasses in the rock leading down to still molten lava. The air of the rock chamber was pleasantly warm. Blye understood now why he had observed no houses or huts on the plateau. With wood as great a rarity as it was, the building of wooden shelters was out of the question. The people were

therefore forced to use stone or baked mud as a building material. But why go to all this trouble if they already had warm, dry, well-lighted rooms underground, left by the prehistoric miners? Probably they only slept in these rooms, living most of their lives outdoors, so the lack of sunlight here would not be serious.

He was beginning to wonder where Eve had gone when Jonah brought her in from one of the dark passages. She was accompanied by three women, two young, one middle-aged with gray hair. Blye guessed from their resemblance to Eve that these might be her mother and sisters. They stood off, silently regarding their visitor with curious glances. Eve had told them everything. Further talk was superfluous in face of the fact itself. There he was. How had he got there?

The older woman borrowed Eve's field glasses. Eve showed her how to use them. Blye found himself being scrutinized through his late property. Finding the alleged magic eyes no better than her own at such a short focus, the mother handed back the glasses with an air of disappointment. Eve then tried them, and finding no superiority, also looked disappointed. Blye laughed, and by gestures explained that the glasses were only valuable at appreciable distances. With their remarkably quick intelligence they seemed to understand, and smiled happily. This man after all might not be so barbarous as he looked. The mother signified for him to follow, and re-entered the tunnel from which she and her daughter had just emerged.

As they walked along this dark tunnel the odor of sulphur and a hot, indefinable smell like that of steam when a kettle boils over on a red-hot stove, became more pungent at each step. To sleep all night in such an atmosphere would be far from pleasant. Presently a dim light announced that they were about to enter another chamber in the rock.

The room to which the four women led him now was of quite a different character from that which they had left. The former was obviously man-made; this seemed to be at least partially the work of unaided nature. In shape roughly elliptical with an irregularly arched roof, it was about a hundred and fifty feet long by fifty feet broad at the widest part. Great fissures in the floor, bridged by well worn stone 'planks,' steamed perceptibly, and from one an occasional gush of boiling water suddenly spurted, to flow out over the rock floor and drain down the surrounding cracks.

This semi-natural room was lighted artificially in a most ingenious way. The ancient stonecutters had hewn out five huge blocks, each of which contained two of the glowing pockets, from some other part of the mine, and had transported them here to serve as lanterns in this combined kitchen and dining-room. The light from these ten pockets made the place as bright as day.

On a broad stone table surrounded by long stone benches were disposed the cooking utensils and dishes of rich, red gold. The surface of the table was worn smooth by thousands of years of use, and its outer parts were considerably thinner than the centre from

the agelong friction of countless pushings back and forth of gold platters. Doubtless many a set of gold plates had been worn out on that stone table, to be discarded down one of the convenient fissures by a people to whom gold was useful but not precious, and as common relatively as iron is to us. The dishes were merely dishes, except that they were of gold, with no beauty of design. They were made for service and durability, with no eye to artistic effect in their massive lines. The cooking pots however chanced to be more pleasing. The soft gold had been ingeniously shaped in several instances to the rough likeness of a bird. The artist's idea was obvious. Since these pots were to cook birds, the meat would have a better flavor if the pot looked like a bird. The pots were in two segments, the upper grasping the lower by a simple arrangement of not very ingenious hasps. Finally there were three gold rings on the top segment, through which passed the gold chains by means of which the whole was lowered into the heat or boiling water of the fissures in the floor. In the intense heat it did not take long to broil or steam a bird. Blye's was ready when he arrived.

At a sign from Eve's mother he seated himself at the stone table and attacked his broiled pheasant. Instead of a fork he had a gold skewer with which to hold down his dinner, and in place of a knife a murderous looking implement like a small cleaver of what he guessed to be copper. Not having much success with these strange tools, and being very hungry, he resorted to nature's implements, attacking the luscious bird

with tooth and claw. Eve was shocked. Taking his dinner from him, she deftly cut it up for him, as she might have done for a four year old, and handed back the result on a huge gold platter. To teach him the proper etiquette of the skewer she took samples here and there of the choicest parts of the meat. Blye was enchanted, both with his dinner and with Eve's manner of eating it.

Having disposed of the bird, he donated the bones to Jonah, who sadly swallowed them whole without so much as a grimace. Blye was still hungry. Was this to be all? Eve noted his empty look and fetched a huge twist of black bread, as hard as a rock, from one of the holes in the wall. She then brought out a large golden bowl of what looked to Blye like silage. At any rate it was greenish and vegetable, and no doubt was intended to pass for a salad. He finished the lot and signified that he was fed. Jonah choked on a crust and dutifully left the table with his new master.

Blye was beginning to wonder whether the four men and the four women together with Jonah constituted the whole population of the plateau. Where were the rest of the inhabitants? Jonah must have had a mother. Was she dead?

As if in answer to his silent question he heard voices approaching down the tunnel by which he had entered. These were the workers coming home to dinner. Thirty or more men trooped into the room and stood petrified with astonishment. Who the devil was this? To their excited questions Eve replied at length. The magic

glasses were exhibited, Blye's clothes inspected, but not too rudely, and his incipient beard noted by the men with almost envious curiosity. One of the men borrowed the field glasses from Eve and darted from the dining room. A dozen followed, eager to verify in the open air Eve's incredible story of the magic eyes.

What most struck Blye about his reception was the evident friendliness of the men and their total lack of fear at a newcomer merely because he happened to be strange. From all that had passed so far he inferred that these fine people were willing that he should join their simple, happy community. Could one of their men have said the like had he chanced to wander into any of our cities? The comparison is perhaps unfair, because the plateau dwellers were few in number. There was plenty for all. So they were not yet forced to be mean in order to survive.

When the men with the glasses returned they brought all whom they had been able to reach by shouts. A hundred or more, men, women and children, now crowded into the cavern. As Blye learned later, he had seen no children until now because the workers ate first. When they were fed and out of the way, the women looked after themselves and the children. Then, having put things to rights, they all adjourned to the upper air to play, or to assist the men in the lighter tasks of bird catching and the gathering of herbs.

A hurried, informal consultation was now held by six of the older men and Eve's mother, who seemed to be a lady of some importance in the community.

Possibly she was the chief cook for this section of the plateau. As the upshot of their deliberations, the council despatched eight of the younger men without any dinner to spread the great news to the other cities of the plateau. Blye rightly guessed that an inhabited system of caverns would be found in the vicinity of each of the slag 'lakes.' The present plateau dwellers were making good use of their heritage from their prehistoric forefathers.

Three of the men now ate a hasty dinner and took charge of Blye. He was led out of the dining-hall and up once more to the sunshine. By right of discovery Eve and Jonah were permitted to accompany the committee to headquarters.

CHAPTER XIX

THE MIRROR

FOLLOWING a busy afternoon during which he saw much and was much seen, Dinosaur was conducted as the guest of honor to the meeting "house" of the plateau dwellers. Not all the inhabitants followed him to the meeting, for the place had capacity for only about three hundred.

As Blye came to learn during his stay on the plateau, this place of meeting was in the nature of a community centre, where such of the people as wished gathered in the evenings to listen, as Blye rather disrespectfully called it, to 'the reading of the minutes.' This in fact was their substitute for church, theatre, temple, moving-picture house, saloon, and club. The simple entertainment provided may have been highly exciting and instructive to those who understood the language and could follow what was going on, but Dinosaur after the first week dozed off, his head in Eve's lap, as soon as the 'reading of the minutes' began.

On his first visit however it was all intensely interesting. The honored guest was led down the inner slope of the volcanic nub to what, in ages past, must have been the site of a main smelter. Practically the

entire floor of the crater was buried under a level lake of blue glass. The customary copper-lined staircase, worn smooth by the passage of unnumbered generations, led from the approximate centre of the 'lake' down to the deeply buried labyrinth of lighted corridors, pitch black tunnels, sleeping chambers with their tussocks of clean flax and linen coverings, kitchen-dining-rooms deep in the still warm volcanic roots of the plateau, and broad mysterious galleries branching unexpectedly in all directions where the prehistoric miners had ransacked the heart of the rock for the precious metal.

Gold, it appeared on every hand, was the common stuff of everyday life, easily worked, fairly durable, and evidently as common as dirt. Copper was also much used, especially in cutting-tools and agricultural implements. These two, gold and copper, are usually the first metals to be successfully worked by primitive peoples, as both frequently occur in the free state. Blye however began to suspect strongly a less obvious origin for at least a part of all these unregarded riches.

The old Jesuits who transmitted the obscure allegories of their predecessors in their editions of *De re metallica* had told more than they intended, namely the simple but elaborately disguised truth. From their possibly unconscious record of the facts, Blye was not at present interested in gold. It was a matter of complete indifference to him where the mother lode might lie, if indeed it lay anywhere in the vicinity. Nor, as might be rashly inferred by the novice in physics, was he expecting a vast deposit of radium.

No radioactive mineral, no matter how valuable in itself, held out the slightest attraction for him.

The object of his search, he now fully believed, was something of infinitely greater value, and inestimably higher importance, than any of these. It was a thing which almost certainly had existed once in nature and which, if any of it still survived, might only be expected to occur in the very oldest rocks thrust up from the inner shell of the earth. Such rocks have burst through the crust of the earth many times in its history, only to weather away and be completely forgotten, save for the mud at the bottom of some deep sea, or the mineral deposits of inaccessible strata. The singular fortune of this plateau, as also of its surrounding amphitheatre of active and extinct volcanoes, was that it was a remnant of such an upthrust from the depths which had not yet disintegrated to worthless rubbish and widely scattered treasures. It was the latest of them all, and so the most valuable. This in brief was Blye's theory. Unlike some theories it offered a reasonable hope of making its author not only famous but rich.

The meeting hall, far below the surface of the plateau, and sunk even a considerable depth below the floor of the amphitheatre, was partly the work of nature improved by a race of born stone-cutters. A vast natural cave had been rounded out so as to intersect two veins of the light-giving mineral. As elsewhere the pockets in these ledges were glassed over to prevent the volatile light from gradually escaping, so that the entire cave was brilliantly lighted.

All the art of the ancient race, and no doubt all that of their successors, had been lavished on this one hall. The common dwelling rooms were bare of everything but the necessities of existence. Here there was a richness of ornament that at first sight was rather overpowering. Gold, being a commonplace of everyday life, was not used in the scheme of decoration. Its absence was compensated by a perfect blaze of pure colors. The people whose lives were spent in what probably was the painted valley of all painted valleys on this earth, had learned to love color as those who are condemned to feast their eyes on muddy skies, miles of brick, and acres of billboards never can. And they had utilized what nature gave them to the fullest effect.

In this hall, for the first time, Blye saw what he knew from the surrounding cliffs of the mountains must exist somewhere in the rocky heart of the plateau. Two gorgeous ledges of crimson cinnabar ran round the walls of the cavern, one almost at the ceiling, the other about three yards lower, and the ceiling itself, sixty feet from the floor was the full underside of a third ledge, glowing in the dazzling light like a dome of rubies. The whole color scheme of the decorations, beginning at the floor with deep cobalt blues predominating, and lightening through all the shades of green, yellow and red, was worked out as a support for that flashing dome.

At first Blye thought the mural decorations were painted onto the rock with mineral colors. On going closer he mistook them for tapestries of extraordinary

brilliance and boldness of design. It was not till he touched one that he recognized its true character. All of these intricate designs and noble pictures were woven in the finest of spun glass, more delicate of texture than raw silk, and absolutely permanent in color. Those sheer blues and yellows, greens and scarlets, would fade from the glass which they permeated only when the glass itself crumbled to amorphous dust.

The themes of these mural decorations defied analysis. Roughly they seemed to fall into two main divisions. At the lower levels the artists in spun glass had depicted for the most part landscapes and, Blye noticed with a thrill of wonder, an occasional scene that must have been drawn from memories of the sea. Wild mountain scenery predominated however, with minute attention to blazing beds of flowers in the foregrounds and distant meadows of the same flowers on the lower foothills. Few animals were depicted, and such as appeared seemed either conventionalized or imaginary. Blye thought he recognized the East Indian ox and the yak, but he could not be sure of the identification, as the artist had not scrupled to endow an animal with purple hair and green horns if by so doing he could the better blend it with the landscape which it adorned.

The second band of glass tapestries was predominantly human. Here the leading theme was the idealized story of mining operations on a vast scale. As all were highly conventionalized it was impossible without long study to decipher exactly what those gorgeously attired toilers were doing, or how they were doing it. Blue tunnels disgorged glistening pyra-

mids of bright green ore as brilliant as an emerald; huge rivers of turquoise waste oozed like molten lava from the bases of blazing tumuli whose bright yellow and vermilion flames, bursting through billows of rolling black, seemed to record an incredible history; and an occasional scene of ruin and utter desolation, in which only the black scoria and crimson lava of some uncontrollable eruption remained of all the blazing color, confirmed the story. Those primitive miners had tamed the volcanic fires to do their smelting.

In one picture, twice as large as any of the rest, a hint of the detail of the process was given. The base of a volcanic cone was tunnelled like an old fashioned mouse-trap, and up the sides of the cone men toiled with heavy metal jars strapped to their backs. By the curious perspective of the picture one side of the cone was depicted with the toiling water carriers, and simultaneously the opposite side of the crater, with a portion of its floor was shown in the same view. Around the inner wall of the crater was piled in a broad band a circular heap of the precious bright green ore. Between this ring of ore and the quiescent surface of the lava, a ring of artificial hollow cones, evidently of white sand, received the water from the metal jars of the carriers.

It was clear from the succeeding pictures, that by suddenly letting the stored water loose over the red-hot lava a terrific conflagration was started, which served to smelt the green ore.

The concluding picture was a graphic record of the inevitable disaster which must have happened many

times in such a tampering with nature. A mad splash of all the hues of red and yellow, from scarlet through vermilion to crimson and orange recorded the explosion of the "smelter" amid an inferno of rolling black clouds through which the silver lightnings leapt and flashed like angry rapiers. The miners had kindled a fire they could not extinguish. The whole cone was shattered, and only another waste of blue slag remained to mark the spot ages later when the last trace of the cone had weathered to its roots.

Another series showed a more conservative method. Here the miners were roasting their ores in the internal fires of the mountains, utilizing the last remnants of volcanic heat in the caverns which, in their deeper tunnelings, they had discovered pitted in the rock. A cross sectional drawing of one of these later mines, not unlike an Egyptian attempt to represent the interior of a house, showed the toilers straining at the cables which hauled their huge metal or earthenware crucibles up to the surface of the earth, to be emptied while the slag still glowed, while other men were shown scraping what looked like a green metal film from the bottom of one crucible, and yet others were tamping down pieces of this green film in a new crucible.

Another group represented four men standing off from a crucible which still glowed with a dull cherry red. One was pointing to the bottom of the crucible, which the artist's peculiar conception of perspective enabled him to reveal, although it must have been invisible to all of the spectators who were supposed to

be viewing it. The object indicated by the man with outstretched arm was a speck of what might have passed as gold but for its exceptional lightness of tint. To Blye this speck appeared to be the color of Eve's turtle. This bit of pale yellow, then, was the priceless thing for which perhaps a whole generation of toiling men had sweated.

The bright green ore which recurred through so many of the pictures, he guessed to be the laboriously gathered 'nuggets' of some rarer mineral embedded in the blue ledges of the tunnels. The pockets left when these precious green cores were hacked from the blue vein had become the natural lamps of the tunnels.

Of the pictures higher on the walls, most appeared to be allegories. Some might have been highly imaginative attempts at graphic history, but Blye thought not.

Perhaps the most suggestive of all the pictures was the allegory on the wall behind and slightly above two malachite turtles guarding the seat of honor. This curious work of art, executed entirely in brilliant yellow, silver and crimson the color of cinnabar, showed a mythical figure with a face like the sun, featureless but with the conventional flames encircling it, raising by the hand a companion, completely human, from a fire of crimson flames. The aspect of the man about to be rescued from the hot place in which he found himself could only be described as royal. If ever a man's face proclaimed him a king, certainly this man's did. His robe too was unique among all those represented, in all the colors of the rainbow, on the multi-

tude of figures on those glowing walls. This man's robe appeared to be of pure silver, shining like a mirror.

The more he studied this strange picture the more hauntingly familiar Blye found it. The whole effect was as if some foreign artist, unfamiliar with our civilization, should attempt to reproduce one of our sacred legends after having heard it described in a nursery rhyme. In a way it was right, and yet it was all wrong. The King in the silver robe should be raising his companion from the flames, and not *vice versa* as in the picture. And where was the lion? No allegory of this sort was ever complete without the lion.

Blye stepped back to get a better view of the mystery, and accidentally trod on Jonah's mop. The piping yelp brought him back to earth. He begged Jonah's pardon, although the dog humbly seemed to say it was all his fault for leaving his tail where his new divinity might tread on it.

"It's all right, Jonah old boy," Blye apologized. "I didn't mean it. What's next on the program? Is that young man—or is he an old man, none of them have whiskers—about to make a speech in my honor?"

The young-old man was already speaking, pointing frequently in the most friendly fashion to the embarrassed Dinosaur. While the man droned on and on, Blye's mind roved back to the mystic picture. Could this possibly be a prehistoric version of all the alchemists' so-called 'nonsense' of the King and the Lion, and the rest of their curious symbolism for the smelting of the nobler metals? If so, how had the Middle

Ages ever learned it from this people's ancestors? By what route had the prophets of a strange cult filtered into Europe? Or was it the other way about? Had the Chinese, Hindoo, Arabian, and European alchemists derived their muddled traditions from an ancestral race from whom these primitive metallurgists also had descended? He gave it up, just as Eve urged him as eloquently as eyes can urge to rise to his feet and make some suitable reply.

Blye rose, both literally and figuratively. For a moment he was nonplussed. What could he say in English that would not sound utterly barbarous to these people whose speech was liquid music? For the first time in his life he regretted not having memorized more faithfully portions of the Odyssey while he was in the Boston Latin school. He did the nearest he could, and recited, to the best of his ability, *Kubla Khan,*

> In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
> A stately pleasure dome decree,
> Where Alph, the sacred river ran
> Through caverns measureless to man,
> Down to a sunless sea . . .

and so on to the glorious conclusion of the sublimest dream a man ever had. As there were no carping critics present, he let himself out and on the whole did pretty well, so well in fact that he had to repeat it five times before they let him sit down again on his malachite bench.

"That's one for Coleridge," he muttered, wiping the perspiration from his forehead. "I always maintained

you don't have to know English to understand what that poem is about. Now I've proved it."

To his dismay Eve insisted on an encore. Seeing no possible escape he gave them Poe's *Ulalume*. They liked it so well that the blushing Dinosaur took refuge in an uncontrollable fit of coughing, and they considerately left him in peace.

The ceremony dubbed 'reading of the minutes' by the disrespectful Dinosaur then began. The presiding officer walked to the farther end of the vast room toward one of the larger landscapes on the lower wall. Blye followed, scenting something new. Before the officer reached his goal, Blye saw that the picture was rather the worse for wear along one side, especially at about the height of a man's waist from the floor. Incessant handling had at last affected the all but indestructible glass fibres. This picture also was set into the wall about two inches. Obviously it covered a sliding panel. Blye waited with interest to learn what might lie behind that gorgeous screen.

The man easily slid back the panel by a slight pressure along the worn part of the glass fabric, disclosing a long, brilliantly lighted passageway between two seemingly endless rows of piled rolls, like a lane in a vast wine bin stacked with huge champagne bottles.

"Okada's rolls!" he exclaimed involuntarily.

There must have been thousands of the enormous rolls in that endless corridor, piled one on top of another on the stone shelves that paralleled the floor. They were evidently catalogued, for on the outer edges of the shelves small glass tablets of different

colors variously arranged evidently attempted to describe the contents of the respective compartments. These tablets were themselves of considerable interest. Each was a strip of spun glass behind a slag plate. There was no effort at writing or drawing on any of them. Whatever idea they were intended to convey was sufficiently expressed, apparently, by the mere arrangement of the differently colored plates.

With due deliberation the man selected an enormous scroll, fully six feet long and as thick as a child's body. Blye asked by the usual dumb show whether he might see what the roll looked like. The man readily complied. These people were proud of their inherited treasures.

The roll was laid on the floor and the first yard or two unrolled. To his astonishment Blye saw now that the roll was not of paper of any sort, but of spun glass, as thin as tissue paper, the brilliant hues of the picture being inherent in the glass fibres. The designs were again purely pictorial. Not a vestige of written speech was anywhere visible, as he learned later, on any of the rolls he was permitted to examine. The race that left their lore and their history indelibly fused into the finest of spun glass had not evolved far enough in culture to invent written speech. Possibly they had never felt the need of it in addition to their vivid pictures.

These rolls, Blye believed, must be the aboriginals from which Okada's had descended. When he and Kameda wasted so many hours examining what Okada left behind in his flight, Blye had no theory, as Okada

had, regarding the origin of the rolls. He had only guessed that they must be antiques. Now he concluded from the haunting similarity between certain of those designs and those on Okada's six that the two sets had at least a common origin, if indeed Okada's were not descended from these.

The carefully selected roll was carried out to the assembly hall. As he closed the sliding panel, Blye noticed that it was made of thin, worm-eaten boards held together by gold clamps. This was one of the half dozen wooden articles which he observed during his entire stay. The work was crude and evidently ancient. The people who made that door found it easier to work in glass, stone, and metal, and moreover wood in that region was a rarity.

The reading of the roll began. It was a curious process, and Blye could not judge whether it was an entertainment or a religious ceremony. The audience took it all gravely enough, except occasionally when they smiled at some remark of the reader. Fifty feet of the broad band of brilliantly colored pictographs were unrolled on the floor, and the reader passed slowly down the length of the strip describing or interpreting the pictures. When he reached the end of his fifty feet, the section was neatly rolled up, the next fifty or sixty feet spread out, and another reader proceeded to expound whatever it may have been that the audience found of such absorbing interest that they sat through it all like well-behaved mice. It lasted nearly three hours. The entertainment was at an end, and the audience began to disperse.

Blye lingered for a few minutes examining the rich stone tables and benches of solid malachite and azurite. The splendid pair of malachite turtles guarding the picture of the silver King especially intrigued his curiosity. They were not only works of art, but clues to the original home of their sculptors, for no such turtles are to be found in the mountains, hundreds of miles from salt water.

Their symbolism was easy to decipher. Health to these people was more than a passing fad. It was their cult and their religion. What more natural than that they select as their totem the turtle which, so far as mere man is concerned, is practically immortal?

His speculations were ended by Jonah. The sad-faced dog insisted that Blye follow him, which he did. Eve had disappeared. One of the men showed the guest to his sleeping quarters, a warm, well lighted room with a truss of flax and linen coverings for a bed. A friendly little fumarole steamed busily in the centre of the floor with a faintly sulphurous odor. Apart from that rather alarming smell and the drawback that the light could not be turned off, the sleeping room was all that the most fastidious could ask.

Worn out by all the excitement of the long day, Blye threw himself on the bed and was asleep in two minutes.

For four weeks Blye was allowed to explore at will, except when he became too curious about the malachite turtles. From that alluring spot he was always gently

warned away, which only made him the more anxious to linger.

On all of his rambles above ground and through the astounding labyrinths of the ancient mines, he was accompanied by the faithful Jonah, and on not a few by Eve. She seemed neither afraid of him nor of the dark, which was very fortunate for his scientific investigations. By pretending that his hands were still sore, he persuaded Eve to lend him her precious 'medicine' during one of their underground rambles. She seemed quite confident that he would return her treasure, and her trust prevented Blye from 'losing' it in the dark, as he might easily have done by slipping it into his pocket. He verified what he had suspected. The pale yellow metal of the turtle was faintly self-luminous. In the dark it shone like a firefly with a faint, greenish glow. Half a bushel of these metal turtles would have supplied sufficient illumination for reading.

Eve did not always accept his pressing invitations to explore, as she had her share of the common work to do. Jonah however toiled not, neither did he spin, so he was always available. On more than one occasion he proved an invaluable guide. No matter how complicated the subterranean mazes in which Blye lost himself, the tufted Jonah always found a way home. He seemed to enjoy the fun as much as Blye. His interest in reeking fissures was even stronger than Blye's, for the latter was no connoisseur of bad smells as was the dog.

On one trip which Blye will never forget as long

as he lives, Jonah seemed reluctant to go the whole way. They had wandered off together immediately after a breakfast of black bread, chopped greens and a pheasant apiece, intending to spend the whole day exploring the deepest level of the vast workings which they had yet found. In this particular exploration Blye leaned heavily, as the critics say, on Jonah. Without the dog's uncanny feeling for the dark and his sure-footed avoidance of pitfalls, Blye might easily have come to serious harm.

This low level of the ancient mines had but few lighted corridors. Most of the pitch black tunnels evidently were vain attempts to relocate the ledge which, at this depth, either had disappeared completely or had been folded back upon itself in an extremely irregular fashion by the thrust of the rocks. Jonah cheerfully trotted into the darkest of these forbidding holes until Blye noticed that he was panting. Thereafter the dog hung back, entering only after Blye ventured to try his own luck. Presently Blye himself began to suffer from the sudden, oppressive heat. The atmosphere in those black tunnels was as sticky as a hot summer day in Chicago. Jonah began to whine, asking to go back. There was a characteristic, metallic taste on the fetid air which distressed the dog more than the man.

His curiosity aroused by that peculiar taste, Blye persisted in continuing down the black tunnel till a faint glow indicated that this noisome corridor debouched on a well lighted vein. As he neared the exit he noticed in the growing light that the walls of the stuffy tunnel gleamed like wet silver. A step or two

more and the cause of that disagreeable taste was revealed. They were walking along a tunnel hewn through an enormous ledge of pure cinnabar, as red as a ruby, and so rich that it sweated continually a fine dew of quicksilver. Doubtless the higher reaches of the vast ledge were in contact with rocks at a fairly high temperature, causing the mercury to ooze from the ore and force its way down through the cooler cinnabar.

The well lighted tunnel in which Jonah and Blye now found themselves seemed to stretch for miles, sloping gradually upward where it followed the tilted vein of blue ore. As they walked along it Jonah again became restless, although the metallic taste was no longer noticeable to Blye. When Blye continued, Jonah turned and gave him a reproachful look. Then he abandoned the lead and slunk behind his master.

Before long Blye himself discovered what was making the dog uneasy. The floor of the tunnel was trembling perceptibly. It was not the characteristic jar of an approaching earthquake that caused the floor to vibrate, but a steadier, quicker trembling. They stopped. Blye listened with all his ears, and Jonah apprehensively scanned his master's face, his own a study in alarmed perplexity.

"Come on!" Blye ordered. "We shan't turn back for a little noise."

Half an hour's panting walk up the sloping tunnel brought them within sight of a gradual curve to the right. Rounding this they saw not a hundred yards ahead of them the abrupt termination of the lights, as

if the prehistoric continuation of the tunnel had sunk or been cut off in some titanic cataclysm. Through the stifling heat they dragged themselves to the black door which opened apparently on a gaping void. Underfoot the rock jarred continually, and from the end of the tunnel came a distant rumble, as of a vast volume of water buffeting its way through subterranean caverns.

The last fifty feet of the tunnel dipped slightly downward, so that the light of its perpetual lamps streamed far out over whatever might lie beyond. Blye expected to gaze into the impenetrable black of a bottomless abyss. What Jonah, creeping in terror after his master, expected to see is not known. It can be safely stated that both were surprised by what they did see.

The immense void of a vast natural cavern was there as Blye had expected. But what caused him to gasp in astonishment was the dazzling patch of light, as bright as a mirror in the midday sun, shining not fifty feet below him where the glare from the tunnel struck the supposed floor of the cavern.

Well worn stone steps led from the exit of the tunnel down to the level of the shining surface. The fires that had hollowed out that vast cavity in the roots of the mountains were primaeval. Ages before the primitive metallurgists drove their tunnel along the blue ledge, that cave had existed, unseen by any eye, its air quivering under the heavy reverberations of the same distant thunder as that which now dinned with maddening persistence upon the ears of its latest auditors.

A great event is said to leave its impress forever on

the place where it occurred. Blye seemed to feel the astonishment of the prehistoric miners, as the last section of their tunnel caved with a metallic splash into the unsuspected sea, still vivid and tangible on the throbbing air.

The stone stairway ended in a rock ledge on the shore of the strangest lake in the world, a vast, level basin of quicksilver. Into this metal sea drained the innumerable rivulets of mercury sweated out from mountains of cinnabar. Trickling down fissures in ever gathering volume, damming up behind barriers of rock, to burst through finally with the accumulated pressure of centuries, and sweeping all before it in one irresistible torrent of liquid silver, many a mighty river had thundered into that lake with a roar that shook half a continent. The drainage was still going on, and would continue till the slow course of time sweated the last drop of mercury from the stupendous masses of cinnabar all about and above this hidden lake.

Feeling his way along the ledge, Blye came to an artificial beach of shelving rock. The faintly diffused light from the dazzling patch on the mirror outlined a bulky object drawn up on the beach, and dimly illumined lustrous masses piled here and there in strange shapes. The latter were nothing less than massive lumps of gold, curiously formed, like many-branched trees of coral.

On seeing those strange trees of branching gold for the first time the temptation to think of them as hav-

ing actually grown like vegetation, or like seaweeds, was irresistible. Their elaborately irregular and yet systematic treelike structure was singularly reminiscent of natural growth, as if these monstrous shapes of metal had indeed taken root in some strange soil to feed and wax rank like prolific crystals branching through their mother liquid.

Exploring farther along the beach, Blye stumbled upon heavy grappling hooks of copper, weighted with huge sinkers of gold, and attached to massive coils of copper chain. In the dim light he could not be certain whether these chains actually were of copper. All that was visible was a mass of crudely wrought metal darker than the gold of the trees. He determined to explore the sea of quicksilver without delay. This discovery confirmed, or almost confirmed, the guess which had urged him to come these thousands of miles to verify it. The thing he hoped to find was not on the rocky beach. The gold in itself was nothing; its curious, tree-like formation was a new and wholly unexpected clue, and it was everything. The priceless thing he sought must be within reach.

He had already guessed the nature of the bulky object looming up among the disordered trees of gold —a boat. The one question was, could he launch it by himself? Jonah could give no help in managing a prehistoric stone boat. Feeling under the keel he found what he expected. The boat was drawn up on stone rollers. To prevent it rolling down the incline to the lake a heavy stone barred the prow. Again, as he had

expected, he found the means of propulsion in the boat itself. Eight awkward copper paddles lay in the bottom.

Hoisting the terror-stricken Jonah into the stone dug-out, Blye rolled away the detaining stone, jumped in, and let the boat roll. The ungainly monster 'took' the quicksilver with a dull splash, shipping several gallons.

Standing up amidships, Blye got busy with one of the long copper paddles. At first, until he acquired some skill, it was like canoeing in a nightmare through an ocean of viscid asphalt. Gradually, however, he made progress, keeping his eye on the one landmark in all that colossal darkness, the shaft of shining silver where the light from the tunnel struck the surface of the lake.

Poor Jonah cowered in the stern, whining through his chattering teeth. Although the air was as oppressive as a Turkish bath the dog shivered as if he were freezing. Blye himself was too elated to experience a proper sense of danger. It was only when he noticed the suspicious rapidity of his progress, and the dwindling oval of the fast vanishing light, that he awoke to what was happening. The stone boat was being swept along, beyond his control, in a strong current. Water at eight miles an hour is hard enough to paddle against: mercury about thirteen times as heavy, flowing at the same rate would carry away the most powerful ocean liner.

When it was too late to be of any practical use he now noticed another danger signal. The steady jarring

sound which had so greatly terrified poor Jonah in the tunnel had swollen to a stupendous volume. The quicksilver could not drain forever into that vast subterranean lake without flowing out again. Somewhere there must be an exit, otherwise the cavern would have filled to the roof and burst ages ago.

From the rapid progress of the boat and the deafening thunder ahead of him in the pitch darkness, Blye guessed what must be his fate. Unless a miracle saved him, the stone boat must shoot the fall of liquid silver plunging oper the precipitous lip of the lake, to shatter itself and him to bits at the bottom of the precipice.

Jonah howled. Blye shut his eyes, instinctively, for nothing was visible in that Stygian din.

CHAPTER XX

THE BLUE LINE

THE miracle happened, otherwise this history could never have been written.

The stone boat struck a snag, hurling Blye down on the yelping Jonah. As in the eddies of an ordinary river before it sweeps over a fall there often are stray logs jammed against the banks, waiting the sway of the stream lines to point them toward the fall, so here a chaotic tangle of branched shapes, dredged up from the shelving floor of the lake by the deep tug of the sweeping current, fouled the crest of the fall. The stern of the boat swung round in the stream, only to smash with a grinding crash into another obstruction. The boat came to rest, rocking and gritting, against the gold branches of the 'trees' uprooted by the current and washed to the edge of the fall.

Blye stood up cautiously and unsteadily in the deafening din, too scared to be thankful for his merciful deliverance. He could see nothing. The sombre noise was terrifying, stupendous, unnatural. No flood jostling over Niagara ever evoked such a feeling of helplessness as did that steady, dull, metallic thunder, as thousands of tons of mercury plunged to an unseen abyss.

Shaken though he was, Blye could not repress a shout of triumph. Those gold trees must have grown on the bottom of the lake. They were indeed crystals in a mother liquid, and this vast subterranean sea of quicksilver was theirs. At last he was within shouting distance of what he sought and what, without a doubt, Okada expected to find.

"Shall I get it, or will he?" Blye asked himself. "Unless I break Jonah's neck and my own in the next half hour, it will be I. Okada is dead. I'll bet on it. He should have been here at least a week ago. Meanwhile, I'm here, and what I've got to do is to get out of this mess alive. Come on, Jonah, old boy! You can't get wet in this stuff. That's one blessing."

Jonah either did not hear in the appalling uproar or he was too stiff with fright to obey his master's voice. Blye felt for him in the bottom of the boat and found him shaking with terror. Grasping the wretched dog by the scruff of the neck, a thing no self-respecting dog likes, Blye swung his rather bulky body up under one arm, clamped him firmly to his ribs, and with his free right hand felt for and grasped a golden limb in the darkness. Then, with Jonah too scared to kick, still tucked awkwardly under his left arm, he pulled himself over the side of the boat, groped with his feet for a 'log' to stand on, and made his way an inch at a time along that providential jam to the very lip of the fall. More than once as he groped from branch to branch his feet went ankle deep in the rushing quicksilver, and he had to put forth all the strength of his right arm to avoid being shot like a bullet over the

precipice. Six inches of water at high speed is bad enough. Multiply its pull by thirteen, and you will get an idea of what Blye waded through on the submerged logs.

At last he felt firm rock underfoot. Wading cautiously over the shelving ledge, with the paralyzed Jonah still clamped to his side, Blye felt his way to the bank at the left of the fall. Increasing confidence dulled his caution. He tripped over a stray branch of gold and came splashing down in the shallow mercury. Before he knew what was happening the slow, heavy drift of the quicksilver was carrying him into the main stream. Jonah had escaped with a shrill yelp that for one scarlet second pierced the terrific, metallic din. In the darkness Blye had no idea what became of the wretched dog. Instinct showed him the proper thing to do. He flopped over in the swashing metal and crawled against the current on his hands and knees. Praying that there were no deep swimming pools between him and the rock bank, he crawled his desperate way an inch at a time against the silver stream. In the darkness he could not tell whether he was taking the shortest way out. After ten minutes' wallowing in this metal bath he unexpectedly bumped his head against the solid rock. The next instant he felt his coat collar seized from above. Jonah had scrambled directly up on the rock ledge when Blye stumbled. All this time he had doubtless been wondering why his master liked to crawl about in water that kept pushing you up when you tried to swim.

With Jonah's assistance Blye quickly climbed out

and sat down on the ledge to collect himself. A few yards to his left the full volume of the metal fall thundered over the precipice, down perhaps a thousand feet to an unknown river. To go that way was obviously impossible. Was there any chance of climbing down farther to the right? And if so, how should he ever find his way back to the upper air and the sunlight? For all he knew the ancient miners might never have tunnelled on this far side of the great silver sea. If so he might as well have let the rushing metal hurl him over the precipice,

"It's up to you, Jonah," he said, "to find a way down and then get us home."

Rising cautiously to his feet he groped for the mop which adorned the end of Jonah's tail.

"Hold still," he ordered. "This is where my prudent foresight begins to count. Will you have the rope round your neck or anchored behind this tuft on your tail? A slip-knot is just the thing. Nature made you to be an explorer's guide."

Unwinding about ten feet of his precious rope from round his waist he made a safe slip noose in the end and securely fastened it behind the mop on Jonah's tail, making things as comfortable as possible by using some of the hair as a cushion. Then he let out another ten feet of the rope and spurred Jonah to action with his foot.

The dog understood nothing of what was going on in the dark and din except that his tail felt strangely uncomfortable. When Blye pushed him, Jonah's one thought was to run away from that unusual discom-

fort and get home as quickly as possible. He had had enough for one day. Setting off at a canter, as sure of himself in the dark as if he were careering through the tall grass of his native plateau, he dragged Blye after him over rough ledges, unexpected slabs that had dropped in ages past from the ceiling, and up or down steep inclines as his fancy took him. The sticky heat seemed no longer to oppress him. He was going home to Eve and dinner.

Gradually the din receded and lessened behind them to a muffled clang. Jonah slackened his speed frequently to investigate, running back and forth as if he had lost his most precious possession. Blye gave him all the rope he wanted, confident that this queer dog with the sagacious hairless face would find what he sought. Almost before Jonah with a glad yap announced his success, Blye guessed what the dog was seeking. The familiar reek of sulphur and hot iron drifted slowly over them in a sultry wave from the right. Jonah had located one of his interesting, smelly crevasses.

After that it was easy. The dog simply followed his nose, and Blye followed the dog as fast as he could, tugging at Jonah's energetic tuft. Suddenly a forlorn howl shattered the darkness, the rope tightened under Jonah's whole weight, and Blye guessed what had happened.

"All right!" he shouted. "Hang on by your tail. I'm coming."

He began hauling in the rope as fast as he could until he reached the lip of the crevasse over which the

unfortunate Jonah dangled head down, pawing frantically at the smooth, perpendicular rock. As he grasped one sturdy hind leg, Blye saw by how narrow a margin poor Jonah had escaped a horrible death. Less than twenty feet below him a vermilion streak of living lava glowed evilly. The crevasse itself was a mere split in the rock not a yard wide. In the dark it was impossible to see whether it was old or recent. Blye for several reasons suspected the latter. If he was right this probably was but one of several new fissures opened by the violence of the last eruption which he and Ivanoff had witnessed.

None the worse for his nerve-trying experience, Jonah skipped nimbly to the farther edge of the glowing rift. Thereafter he was more cautious, using his eyes as well as his nose in the dark. The hot smell of the lava from innumerable cracks in the rocky floor blazed a sure trail to the farther wall of the vast cavern. On reaching this barrier of sheer basalt, Jonah turned first to the left, trotting briskly along parallel to the wall for nearly a mile. Not finding what he expected he turned back and galloped full tilt, Blye panting after him through the dark, a distance of about three miles in the opposite direction. He seemed to know where he was going; the initial error of a mile was merely the dog's way of recovering his sense of direction and finding his bearings. Blye wondered whether he had explored this part of the cave before on his wanderings with Eve. When Jonah abruptly darted off to the left and dived at top speed down a steeply sloping tunnel as black as soot, Blye felt certain

that the dog was following a familiar trail. All his sense of 'lostness' evaporated as if by magic.

The black tunnel seemed never-ending. The primitive miners must have had a sublime faith in their feeling for metals to drive this barren burrow without encouragement clean to its natural end. As Blye panted after the racing Jonah another explanation suggested itself. This was no tunnel in a mine of the precious ore, but a shortcut to the silver sea. Using vast quantities of gold in their everyday life the old metallurgists and their successors would make frequent trips to the lake, to dredge up the branches of those strange trees that grew and broke off in the swift currents of mercury, like limbs of an elm in a high wind, to pile up in wild disorder on the edges of the silver sea as broken coral does on a tropic beach.

How many years, or centuries, he wondered, must elapse before one of those unseen trees of gold, springing from a single crystal on the rocky bottom, reared its heavy branches up through the mother liquid of mercury to the surface, there to cease upward growth and branch laterally, until the sheer weight of the accumulating gold brought the whole mass crashing down through the quicksilver to the trembling rocks? Had any tree of all that metal forest yet reached its full stature? Or had the whole forest been felled many times in past ages, to be dredged limb by limb to the surface, and fashioned into common things long since lost and forgotten? Was there no way of hastening the natural growth and making the mother liquid more

fertile? Blye imagined that there was, and that one man at least besides himself had guessed the secret.

Any modern chemist being given the golden forest of crystal might easily learn how to quicken its growth. But Okada, Blye suspected, had started from the other end. Knowing how the growth if once initiated might be hastened, he had sought to discover how and where nature had first planted the life-bearing germ of growth.

What was this germ? Sages had dreamed of it since the dawn of reason, prophesying that some day it must be found. The whole science of the middle ages, inherited by obscure channels from immemorial traditions, blindly blundering about this fundamental problem, succeeded only in building up laboriously the most appalling mountain of nonsense yet imagined by the human mind. Their labor however was not wholly futile. Out of it evolved the chemistry of our own age. Our own science will no doubt seem as fantastic to the men of a hundred years hence as does the pseudo-science of the thirteenth century to us, and as wildly improbable as to us is the physics of only thirty years ago. We move faster and faster; yet however fast we travel, we can never escape the perennial riddles that perplexed the first thinking man.

It was Blye's guess that all the jumbled hints, guesses, superstitions and allegories painstakingly disguised by the Jesuit fathers in their editions of *De re metallica,* and retailed with greater precision in their accounts of early explorations in Asia, were but

echoes of a great tradition lost for ages through an accident of nature. Their curious lore about the 'Sun,' the 'King,' and the 'Lion' still shining in undiminished glory in some inaccessible valley of the remote mountains could not all be pure invention. It takes more imagination than most peoples have to lie convincingly for generation after generation. Somewhere behind the obscure glow there was a light, and buried beneath all the allegories a great and simple truth of nature. By a species of accident, or rather by the inevitable logic of evolution in a given environment, an intelligent race of men somewhere, sometime, had stumbled upon the truth only to lose it, or to be themselves lost save for the distant rumor of their greatness. The men who drove the tunnel through the stubborn rocks were the fathers of at least the Asiatic version of the traditions handed on to modern Europe by the Jesuit fathers as mere curiosities of idle speculation.

Not all the transmitters however were skeptics. Some indeed were so greatly impressed by the essential truth of what they heard that they took pains to disguise it in curious and symbolic scrolls around their texts, lest they become a laughing stock to their harder headed brothers. Blye made a mental resolution never to tell the half of what he himself had seen lest he too become an honorary member of the Ananias Club.

Jonah gave a yap of sheer joy. A faint glow far down the tunnel showed that they were about to return to what Jonah considered civilization. They hastened on till the glow became a brilliance, then a blinding glare, for they were about to enter the main high-

way of the mother lode, mined out ages before by the assiduous seekers of the blue ore.

The broad tunnel which they now entered shone like a blast furnace, or rather a battery of millions of mercury vapor lamps, for its radiance was blue like the light in the other corridors. In this main artery however there were no extinct pockets where the light that once shone had burned itself out. It was the youngest and most virile of all the veins explored and stripped of its treasure by ancient miners. On either wall the blue line of the precious ore, encircled by the haloes of rotten rock, stretched unbroken apparently for miles through the crust of the earth like a double thread, to guide those who travelled these subterranean mines through all their baffling labyrinths. Minor galleries, some black as soot, others blazing like the mother lode itself, branched at irregular intervals on either side, some sloping gently up as they followed a tilt of the ledge, others plunging swiftly down to the roof of another vast cavern whose floor was not quicksilver but glowing lava. The primitive miners had searched thoroughly. The branching tunnels all ended either in other galleries or above the vermilion lava which showed that further search in that direction was futile.

Jonah did not hesitate here. He knew the way home. Before they started Blye undid his great indignity, and tied the rope loosely round Jonah's neck. Then he gave the dog his head. He was hungry and parched with thirst. Jonah turned to the right, retracing the distance lost when they turned left at the fall.

Presently the jarring of the floor again became perceptible, and the muffled thunder of the metallic fall, two miles or more to their right behind a wall of solid rock, made itself felt rather than heard.

Directly ahead a drumming rush became audible, increasing momentarily as they sped toward its source. The tunnel branched into three, the centre avenue only being lighted, for the side corridors passed beyond the boundaries of the blue ledge. Between the side tunnels and the main well-lighted avenue, short cross tunnels at right angles to the axis were driven at frequent intervals, so that the whole effect was that of a pillared corridor with lamps of dazzling brilliance shining down its middle length.

The dog left the well lighted highway and passed behind one row of the pillars which remained to support the pockets of light. Passing the seventh pillar, and looking out to the main tunnel, Blye saw that its floor was cut clean away. Pulling Jonah up short, he walked cautiously to the edge of the chasm to investigate.

When he leaned over and looked down he realized perhaps for the first time that the men who honeycombed the deep roots of the mountains in their search for minute specks of a pale yellow metal, and who transfixed the rainbow in the imperishable brilliance of spun glass, were true lovers of natural beauty. No utilitarian object could possibly have been served by this labor of the pillared tunnel. Hearing the drumming rush beneath the floor of the mother lode they guessed its cause, and hewed away the massive roof

of the cavern which concealed the wonder. Their reward for all their labor, Blye agreed, was ample. The stark blue light streamed half a thousand feet sheer down to a broad torrent of mercury racing in its deep channel down to the deeper fires.

One glimpse of such a spectacle would be remembered for a lifetime. He had seen the ultimate wastage of the liquid silver that plunged from its subterranean sea to shatter itself in metallic spray on the rocks a thousand feet below. Following Jonah he left the place, determined never to revisit it. Fate however decided otherwise.

Jonah was all for getting home as quickly as possible. So when Blye voted for exploring a unique tunnel which branched to the right about half a mile beyond the pillars, the dog balked, and sat down on his haunches. The wistful, Dog Toby appeal of his puckered face was all but irresistible. Blye hardened his heart and gently toed the reluctant Jonah into the alluring tunnel.

What had attracted Blye's attention was the lighting of this long, straight corridor. Originally dark, it had been illuminated in the same way as the meeting hall, namely by huge cubical blocks containing pockets of light. Evidently this tremendous labor indicated something of unusual importance. As Blye was presently to learn it led straight to the heart of the whole matter so far as he was concerned.

The artificially lighted tunnel paralleled the long dark one by which they had entered the main corridor of the mother lode. This one however proved to be

but about half the length of the other. As they proceeded along it the quivering of the floor increased rapidly in intensity, the jarring noise became distinctly audible, mounted to a muffled roar, and finally thundered into the tunnel in a stunning volume of sound.

Blye had to drag poor Jonah out. Emerging from the tunnel he stood like a stone, dazed by the sheer magnificence of what he saw. On the level floor of a vast cavern a wide circle of the lighted blocks was disposed like a battery of searchlights, all focussed on one transcendent spectacle. Down from the black void a festooned veil of gleaming silver descended in thunder to an immense pool of quivering metal, the source of the subterranean river which flashed under the mother lode. From the shaking pool rose a fine mist of pure quicksilver, brilliant in the blue light as a cloud of diamond dust. Seen from below it was sublime; what it must appear from above, far up in the impenetrable darkness, Blye could only imagine. For a moment he was tempted to retrace his steps and see whether it might be possible to make his way out on the golden logs to a view over the crest of the fall.

This intention was abandoned but half formed for another, which he put into immediate action. About a hundred yards to the left of the pool, in the sheer wall of the precipice over which the metal fell, he saw the lighted entrance of another corridor. From its orientation it must pass directly under the lake of mercury.

Skirting the pool, Blye made straight for this tunnel. In imagination he reconstructed the labor of the

miners. Following the blue line of the mother lode they had heard the distant thunder of the fall behind barriers of rock, in some places miles thick, and had endeavored by trial borings to locate the source of the sound. The long, dark tunnel opening from the mother lode into the cavern of the lake was their first successful attempt. They had explored the lake, found the fall, followed the river of mercury and then, toiling perhaps for a generation, they drove a more direct route from the blue line to the fall. Blye fully expected to find something of supreme importance in this new tunnel leading under the silver sea. He was not disappointed.

Like that from the blue line to the fall, this broad tunnel was artificially lighted by pockets in huge blocks of stone quarried from some vein of the blue ore. As he dragged the reluctant Jonah half sitting into the entrance, he noticed immediately the strange quality of the artificial light. The glare from the pockets in the cubical blocks was as blue as ever, but in the half shadows the first fringes were distinctly green. This peculiar green hue superimposed on the lighter shadows increased perceptibly with each twenty feet. After half a mile the green light drowned the blue; at three quarters of a mile the blue pockets looked bright yellow, and the intense green from some unseen source of illumination, diffusing down the tunnel, became more than mere light. The whole corridor was filled with a subtle, glowing gas as green as a glacial lake.

Blye's attention was first drawn to the peculiar effects of that green light by Jonah's ridiculous antics.

The dog seemed to be trying to waltz, an expression of the most inane joy lighting up his usually dejected face. Then Blye himself felt the exhilaration. It was a drink of electricity, a draught of sheer vitality. Breathing deep he drank in his fill of this elixir, reckless whether its effects might prove beneficial or fatal. Whatever it was it had a clean taste, and it quickened the pulse like champagne.

There was no feeling of intoxication. The very sensation of well-being induced by that vitalizing light seemed a sufficient guarantee against the customary headache. The effect quickly reached its maximum, after which no further increase in the general feeling of physical fitness and mental stimulation was perceptible. Unlike indulgence in alcohol, continued drinking did not seem to induce drunkenness. If this indeed should prove to be the case, Blye felt that he had discovered the means of making prohibition a success. The idea struck him as absurd, and he laughed boisterously. One look at Jonah confirmed his suspicions.

"We're both drunk," he declared. "Only you haven't sense enough to know it. I have. Let's see what there is to see and get out."

In spite of his pleasant intoxication, Blye still kept his wits, noticing one significant fact which might well have escaped a less observant critic. Although the green light was almost blinding in its intensity, the huge cubical blocks, each with its dimmed blue light now shining like pale yellow gold, continued in an unbroken series along both sides of the tunnel. These lights were now quite unnecessary, as their feeble illumination

added little to the green blaze. Therefore, Blye concluded, the green light was not present in the tunnel when the old miners set the cubical blocks in place as lamps. Whatever caused the green glare in this particular section of the tunnel was of later origin than the tunnel itself.

Dragging the disreputable Jonah after him Blye hurried on to the source of the green light. Glancing up at the roof ahead he saw that the rock arch itself emitted a green glow. Fifty feet ahead farther on the roof could only be described as 'green hot.' Another fifty feet and the whole ceiling was blazing like an emerald in the full sunlight, and the rock had become translucent. It was the diffused light from this fiery green glow which had crept along the tunnel to drown the blue lamps. A few yards farther on the tunnel turned off at right angles and ended abruptly in a chamber about twenty feet long. Blye found himself at the very centre of the mystery.

The roof of the tunnel in this secluded chamber was as transparent as a clear green glass. The very nature of the rock had changed in the course of thousands of years under the incessant beat of some intense radiation. At first opaque, the rock, the floor of the quicksilver sea, had now become transparent. As the distance from the central patch of brightest green diminished, the transparency of the rock rapidly decreased, until at half a mile down the tunnel the roof was opaque and lifeless.

The transparent arch overhead acted as a vast lens through which streamed the fierce green rays of a

huge, irregular 'sun' set on the rock floor of the sea above. This sun was set in a 'sky' of the purest blue, except for a broad halo of non-luminous green which completely surrounded its flaming disc. Allowing for the fact that he was looking up at this sky through an intense green light diffused through the transparent rock, Blye guessed that the stuff of which that strange sky was made must be itself a golden yellow and its apparently green halo an aura of pure silver white. In fact he jumped to the conclusion that what he saw as a bright blue sky above him was nothing less than the golden 'soil' from which sprang the forest of branching gold in the metal sea. The trees of that forest of course were not themselves visible; only their matted roots overspreading the rock bottom of the mercury sea in a solid mass appeared through the green lens.

In the immediate vicinity of the fierce sun itself the gold had not taken root. It was easy to picture what must be going on in the silver sea overhead. The intense radiation repelling the minute crystals of gold, as they drifted in the stream of mercury above the sun and surrounding it, convected the gold particles like a fine dust far from the central fire, so that the stream of flowing mercury was always kept free of growing gold above and around the sun. The slowly drifting crystals would fall far from the sun to the branches of the 'trees' which they reared, an atom at a time, thus leaving the mother stream of mercury free and ever flowing, unfouled by tramelling gold. But for this slow convection keeping the stream open all

around the sun the forest of gold must have ceased to grow. Like a strong wind, or like the pressure of light from a star repelling the clouds of cosmic dust erupted with its flames, the radiation from the green sun swept the liquid metal in its vicinity free of dust. Could the roof of the tunnel be shattered the whole sea of quicksilver would drain down the last tunnel and out over the fissured floor of the cavern.

Like a dazzling green ember set in ice, the 'sun' which illuminated this blue sky of pure gold blazed steadily without flaw or flicker. Roughly circular in shape, the great green disc appeared to be about twenty feet in diameter. Probably it was not a flat disc, but a sphere swimming in a mercury halo and surrounded by a sky of pure gold. The quality of its peculiar light was identical with that emitted in the dark by Eve's 'medicine.' There could be no doubt that her turtle and this enormous sphere that might outshine the sun were composed of the same precious metal.

It was not difficult to reconstruct in imagination a reasonable history of that flaming green sun. Without a doubt it represented the major part of all the treasure which the great race of miners had smelted, a tiny grain at a time, from all but incredible masses of the archaean ores. The remainder of their labor was dispersed in amulets and charms, their own magic, but not futile, medicine, now the most precious heirlooms of their successors. Accident had revealed the curative properties of the pale yellow metal which glowed with a green phosphorescence in the dark.

Concurrently with their discovery of the health-

giving qualities of the blue ore, or later of the pale yellow metal itself, the primitive metallurgists could not fail to note another remarkable 'accident.' To a naïve mind nature is not the unanswerable riddle that it is to a more sophisticated intelligence. It doubtless appeared quite in the order of nature therefore to the miners when in the long course of their vast digging, they observed that the blue ore occurred usually where quicksilver also was found. And where the crimson of the cinnabar gleamed above the blue lines of the ore they found also gold, even as we to-day habitually find gold associated with quicksilver. With primitive, unsophisticated insight they linked the three together into a chain of cause and effect, just as we have learned to do in the last generation in our theories of the origin of metals. What seemed to them so obvious appears to us mysterious. The pale spirit in their blue ores was the 'father' of the rich, red gold, and the white, mobile mercury was its mother. What could be simpler, or more essentially true?

If minute specks of the pale yellow spirit could beget considerable bodies of gold in the nourishing mother liquid, an artificial mass of it sunk deep in the sea of mercury should cause the whole to live and bear gold. Perhaps it was merely a primitive religious sense of the essential completeness and unity of nature that caused the forgotten mines to hasten the slow, haphazard growth of the gold by bringing together in one place its 'father' and 'mother.'

The sea of mercury doubtless existed long before the race became semi-civilized. Some great prophet or

fakir of the race perhaps discovered in the existence of this 'great mother sea' the pre-ordained destiny of his people. They were the chosen race to wed the pale yellow spirit with the metal that lived like water. At any rate they had done it, whatever their motive, and this tunnel to the holiest of all their holy spots, the place where the beneficent rays of the pale yellow spirit streamed down at first unseen through the rock ceiling, was their shrine, their altar of healing and their fountain of perpetual youth. It was also, Blye strongly suspected, the father and mother of all the mystical nonsense of all the alchemists of Europe, Asia, and Africa.

"Well, Jonah," Blye remarked, "what about it? Am I right? This place must have been pitch black when they first buried their main treasure in that quicksilver lake you enjoyed so much. Nevertheless I'm going to pick that gorgeous green sun out of its golden sky, if not on this trip, then on the next."

He peered closely at the rock wall which terminated the tunnel.

"As I expected," he said. "This was their fountain of youth. The incurables and the old men on their deathbeds were carried in here as a last resort. If the full drenching of the invisible spirit couldn't do any better than the little metal turtles, it was a hopeless case. Well, if they felt as good as you and I do now, they died happy."

Still clinging to the rock where it had been fastened by gold pins before the beginning of recorded history, an occasional strand of spun glass recalled the picture

which generations of handling had all but worn completely away. A few tell-tale strands of pure silver betrayed the King, long since fretted to dust, by his robe. This picture in its glory undoubtedly was a replica of that between the malachite turtles in the meeting hall, or rather the gorgeous allegory still existent was a late copy of this sacred original, executed before the hands of thousands of seekers after health and youth wore it down to nothing.

"We might as well go home now," Blye remarked. "There can be nothing anywhere on the earth or under it to beat this."

Jonah joyfully bettered his record back to the well-lighted corridors of the mother lode. Turning unerringly to the right he romped up the steep slope. Blye followed without a protest, still exhilarated by the elixir of the green light. The slope of the blue line was continually upward, now gentle, now almost at forty-five degrees, for a distance which Blye estimated as five miles.

Coming to the end of the tunnel proper, they found three branches, the central one dark, the laterals still well lighted. The blue vein here parted into two. The dark, central tunnel sloped sharply downwards. To Blye's surprise Jonah insisted on exploring the dark tunnel.

It proved to be very short. Before a blank wall brought them to an abrupt halt, Blye noticed a large pocket of strong greenish phosphorescence just above

his head. Cautiously inserting his hand he drew out a small metal turtle, an exact dupiicate of Eve's. This evidently was the store of spare medicine. Blye guessed where he was, and why his hosts had always warned him away from the picture between the malachite turtles. Among other reasons they did not wish him to be unduly tempted by his desire to possess a turtle. Nor would they want a half-civilized stranger poking about their holy of holies far under the silver sea.

For a moment Blye was tempted to slip half a dozen of the precious turtles into his pockets. He even went so far as to fish about in the green glow for the biggest. In his search he came upon several handfuls of smaller objects which at once aroused his curiosity. They proved to be crude caps such as could fit easily over a tooth. Probably sufferers from internal disorders wore these crowns on their teeth in the hope that the beneficent green light would be drawn into their bodies with their breath, and also with their food. It was a reasonable and a rather pathetic assumption.

He had almost succumbed to his wish for a turtle when he thought better of it.

"I'm hanged if I'll steal one," he muttered, putting it back. "Before I leave, I shall honestly ask them for it."

Jonah in the meantime had been attending to business. Blye found him scratching at a wooden panel. Realizing what might happen if Jonah proclaimed their safe returning by filling that black tunnel with reverberant howls, Blye unleashed him and promptly

grabbed his wet nose and held his jaws together. Then he listened with all his ears. He could hear nothing on the farther side of the panel.

Releasing Jonah's nose, Blye cautiously slid back the panel an eighth of an inch. As the plane of brilliant light streamed along the wall of the tunnel, Jonah gave full voice to his joy. There was no time now to hesitate. Blye hastily slid back the panel and followed the prancing Jonah into the meeting hall. Luckily the "reading of the minutes" was over for that night. He quickly closed the tunnel entrance, and stepped out in front of the King between the malachite turtles.

Not lingering in that forbidden spot, he darted to the far side of the room and lay down on the malachite bench which he and Eve usually occupied during the reading of the minutes. Footsteps approaching down one of the entrance corridors warned him that Jonah was bringing at least one of his friends to share the glad news that the stranger had safely returned. Blye pretended to be fast asleep. The steps, guided by the all-seeing Jonah, came directly toward his bench. He felt himself gently shaken by the shoulder. On opening his eyes he looked full into Eve's.

She was troubled. Blye's ruse had not deceived her. Pointing to the picture of the King she looked her question.

Dinosaur tried to shake his head and failed. Her eloquent, reproachful eyes were too honest. He ended by nodding.

She glanced hurriedly behind her toward the sliding panel which led to the corridor of the rolls. Then,

taking out her turtle, she dangled it before Blye with an interrogative look, pointing at the same time to the forbidden door. Blye shook his head. She then pointed to her teeth and again Blye shook his head. He was thankful now that he had not 'taken' what he wanted. It would have been difficult to lie to Eve.

She believed him without further argument. A slight noise behind them gave warning that the chief reader was reentering the hall after having put away the glass roll of that evening's entertainment. At a sign from her Blye hastily rose to his feet and followed her glance to one of the pictures on the wall. The entering reader found a pair of lovers admiring the decorations.

The man shouted some remark, evidently broadly humorous, in Eve's direction. She blushed, and replied rather shortly. Blye of course felt pleasantly foolish. The reader left them to themselves, and Eve moved away.

Blye would have given all he possessed for the ability to say three words in Eve's language. Being tongue-tied, and not wishing to take an undue advantage of her generosity in saving him from an awkward predicament, he did not press his point. They had a secret, and that, for the moment, was enough. With a flash of admiration that almost paralyzed him, Eve gave him a searching glance and followed the romping Jonah from the hall. Blye waited till she disappeared and then went soberly to bed.

The week and a half that followed found Blye working with the men a few hours a day, and exploring at will when work palled. They let him do as he

pleased. In the evenings he met with two or three hundred others in the hall, not to listen to the reading of the minutes, but to feast his eyes on Eve. From the friendly smiles in their direction as they sat apart on one of the malachite benches, Blye inferred that he and Eve were accepted as lovers. What, he wondered, was the next move in the customs of these people? Did the woman propose, or was that irksome detail the man's duty? And what then? Would they expect him to settle down for good and become one of them? Perhaps if he married Eve they would give him a gold turtle as a wedding gift. Then he and Eve could escape to 'civilization' and live happily ever after.

But could they? Was there any better place in which to spend one's life than this simple island stranded here in the backwash of time? Blye began to doubt. Eve, he felt, could never be happy elsewhere. She would miss her dream mountains which now she studied through the magic glasses for hour after hour every day the sun shone and dispelled the mists. As for himself, could he endure it long away from books and his own people? On the other horn of the dilemma he found himself impaled a hopeless bachelor for life. For unless he married Eve he would remain single to the end of his days. This was no passing fancy, but true love. He felt it instinctively, and the feeling did not make him altogether happy. He was face to face with an impossible situation. To live here all his life with her was unthinkable to his modern mind; to exist elsewhere without her would be colder and lonelier

than death. For the present, however, he would abandon his problem, and live while he might.

It solved itself. On the eleventh evening after his return from the fateful expedition, he and Eve were in the great hall listening to the reading of the minutes. Eve doubtless followed the entertainment with interest, for she was wide awake, one hand gently caressing the head in her lap. Blye dozed unashamed. He was content to dream of Eve and to feel her hand in his hair. Suddenly a splintering crash brought him to his feet. Staring with the others in the direction of the malachite tortoises, he saw the picture of the King ripped from its panel as a man stumbled headfirst into the hall.

It was Okada.

CHAPTER XXI

PRO PATRIA

For a week Okada tottered dizzily on the brink of death, held back only by the tender hands of these people who treated him as one of their own. On undressing him they discovered about his waist a silken cord to which a small silk wallet was tied, and in this they found what they recognized at once as one of their medicinal teeth. Although they could understand not a single word of all the emaciated man's ravings, yet he evidently was one of their own kind. Otherwise how came he to possess the priceless medicine? They nursed him as a welcome prodigal. He had returned by the blue line. Doubtless his father's fathers had followed the blue line clear beyond the mountains where they knew it ended, and now their distant son had returned to his own people to tell them what the adventurers found.

Such at any rate was Blye's theory to account for the remarkable consideration which they lavished on the stricken man. He had long ago concluded that these plateau dwellers knew how to escape from their hidden fastness, but did not wish to end their isolation. Nor, perhaps, did they welcome many intrusions from outsiders like himself. With Okada, however, it was

different. Not only the 'medicine' proved his kinship, but his aristocratic features, although of a different mould from theirs, had more in common than a Caucasian's with their own. Blye felt that his nose for the time being was out of joint. Eve among others was not above making him taste the bitter wine of jealousy.

As Okada regained control of his senses, he insisted by signs that they bring back his heavy pack. Understanding what he wished they did so immediately. They had not sought to open it or to tamper with it in any way. Nor had they unrolled the spun glass picture which this unaccountable prodigal grasped in his right hand when he stumbled into their hall and wrecked one of their most treasured possessions, the great allegory of the silver-robed King rising from the flames of cinnabar crimson. They had repaired the damage as best they might, and posted a guard by the malachite turtles to see that their first visitor did not explore what he, as an unmedicined barbarian, had no right to see. When they restored Okada's pack to him they brought with it his roll of spun glass.

Okada's exhibition of the picture which he and Kameda borrowed from the monks seemed to be final proof to the plateau dwellers that he was indeed a lost son returned to his motherland. Three days later he was moved with much solicitude from his rock chamber to the meeting hall, preparatory to being carried to the holy of holies in order that he might receive the full benefit of the green light. The metal turtles thus far appeared to have done him little good. The

full blaze of the healing light surely would restore him to youth and vigor.

Thus far Blye had kept himself studiously in the background. He had no wish to let Okada learn of his presence until he found out what the Samurai intended doing—provided he lived long enough to do anything but die gracefully. But now, seeing Okada about to be carried into the main tunnel, and guessing his destination, he decided to act. Brushing aside the bearers, he stepped in front of the prostrate man. Okada stared up at Blye's face coldly. He spoke first, without surprise and without emotion.

"You are the American geologist?"

"Yes. And you are the Japanese wanted in Boston —or Cambridge—in connection with the death of the Emperor's agent. Your name is Okada. Mine's Blye, as you doubtless have learned from Kameda. You may not remember me, but I'm the man who bumped into you in the library the night the spy was run down."

In spite of his apparent helplessness, Okada was quite rational. He was also ready to fight.

"Why are you here?" he demanded sternly.

"On the other hand," Blye retorted, "why are *you* here? I got here first."

"And if you are wise," Okada answered with intense seriousness, "you will leave first. Follow the blue line in that tunnel. You cannot miss the way once you set your feet in the right direction. It will lead you to the crater of an extinct volcano in the southern wall of the valley surrounding this plateau. Climb out of

the crater and bear south. You may go hungry, but if you survive the descent you will find Chinese gold washers in the mountains, as I did. Then you will be in northern Cho-sen. The way from there is easy."

"You yourself don't seem to have found it so."

"I had difficulty in reading my map. There are many volcanoes in the mountains to the south. The right one was the eighth that I tried. My food did not last after I lost my way in the craters."

"Yet you carried your heavy pack. What's in it? I'm interested. Let us get to the bottom of things at once."

"Are you a chemist?" Okada asked.

"Only enough to understand my geology," Blye admitted. "Explosives?"

Okada nodded. "The proper ingredients—certain halogen and ammonia compounds—for making the highest explosives known to chemistry. I have but to mix them. How did you guess?"

"Kameda told me you are a true son of the Samurai. Of course he may have been lying."

"He always lied. You guess well."

"And as a rabid reactionary," Blye continued, "you don't wish Japan to profit by your discovery."

"Japan *shall* profit by my discovery!" Okada exclaimed, half rising from the pallet in his excitement.

The attendants who till now had stood by trying vainly to read in these strange men's faces the thoughts which their speech concealed, hastily interfered. Blye resisted. He was not to be balked now that he was face to face with the man whom he recognized as his

enemy. The fight to a finish had begun sooner than he intended, but it did not find him unprepared. Nor did Okada appear to wish for a truce.

"I have warned you," the Japanese continued, waving aside the hands that tried to pacify him. "Leave while you still can."

"Why have you warned me?" Blye asked curiously. "I know a great deal about you from our mutual friend Kameda, and from putting his twos together to make fours."

"I always give warning," Okada answered coldly. "I am a Samurai."

"Quite so," Blye agreed. "Excuse me for not being ready to recognize your right to give me this warning. Did you warn the man you flung to his death in Boston?"

The cold sarcasm cut.

"What do you know of me?" Okada flung up at his tormentor, white with passion. "You are here for greed, like all your countrymen."

"And you are here because you are a monomaniac. That these simple generous people have saved your life doesn't appear to matter at all to you. Why can't you leave them in peace?"

"In peace for you to plunder? Not while I have my halogens!"

"You haven't got them," Blye retorted, making a dive for the heavy pack. "I'm going to pitch this over the edge of the cliff."

Okada tried to rise, only to fall back weakly. Seeing the rank outsider about to rob their prodigal son of

his treasured box, the kindly plateau folk interfered. The pack was restored to Okada's side. Blye turned to Eve, gesticulating. Oh, what would he not have given for half a dozen words of her language! She seemed to think her lover mad with jealousy at her attentions to this poor sufferer, and she was rather hurt. In desperation he turned again to Okada.

"Haven't you any fundamental decency in your soul? I understand your fanaticism. You don't want Japan to go to the dogs by getting hold of this metal. I know now what it can do, although I hadn't the shadow of an idea when I started. Well, I don't want it either. Nothing on earth is worth such a price as these people will have to pay. Let us buy each other off. You leave here with me, and I'll keep my mouth shut about all this, permanently. Your Emperor need never know that this place exists. Who is going to find it? Nobody as long as you or I still walk the earth."

"You will swear?" Okada mocked.

"Certainly I will, if that will make you any happier —provided you leave here at once and never come back," Blye retorted. "I mean it."

"On the word of an American?" Okada retorted.

"Yes, but what about your own? What did you promise Geraldine Shortridge?"

"Nothing," Okada replied coldly.

"And she got it. I intended to break your neck for you when we met, but I can't do it when you're lying down. No white man could. I shall have to wait till you're better. Then we can settle in full."

"I care nothing about Miss Shortridge," Okada said, indifferently.

"I dare say you don't, *now*. Where did you get that gold tooth these people have accepted as your passport to their hospitality?"

"Not from Miss Shortridge," Okada replied shortly.

"From Kameda?"

"What is it to you, where I got it?"

"He brought it to you?"

"No," Okada replied slowly. "Kameda merely opened the door for me. Like you, he too wished to get rich."

"Tell me the whole story," said Blye, sternly. "If you don't, I shall chance the consequences and do my best to break your neck. You force me to be frank. Better begin at once; I'm quick on my feet."

Okada realized Blye's advantage. He had no wish to be incapacitated after having endured untold hardships to this point to save the honor of his country. So he coldly recited the tale of his adventure with Kameda in the monastery, omitting nothing. He seemed to take a disdainful satisfaction in proving to his competitor that he personally obeyed a higher call.

When Okada finished this episode, Blye questioned him closely about his life in America. As he had suspected, Okada had made his way in and out of the country on another man's passport. The other man's picture was easily enough removed, and Okada's own, taken for a Korean passport, substituted in its place.

"And you went by your own name in America?"

"Why not? It was on my passport, because I put

it there, after removing the other man's name. I am a chemist. The name is as common as Smith. Would the Emperor's agents expect to find me under my own name, even if they found a clue to my refuge? Surely they would give me intelligence enough to change my name, as I did when I left America, altering the passport again."

"And you did all those dirty jobs in restaurants and cheap Japanese shops—why?"

"For the honor of Japan. I needed money to serve her."

"I believe you. As I said, you are a monomaniac. You have told me the main outlines of the whole story?"

"All that is necessary to show you that I serve Japan, not greed, like you and Narumi."

"Like me? Very well, I have offered to buy you off. What about it?"

Okada searched Blye's face as if trying to read the riddle of the white man's honesty. His own face was a mask.

"If I leave here the day I am well, you swear to go too, and tell nobody that this place exists?"

"I do. Unreservedly," Blye replied.

"Then ask these people for food. The journey down from the crater where the blue line ends is long."

Blye turned to Eve. By signs he made her understand what was wanted. She left him, wondering. In fifteen minutes she returned with a linen sack containing food enough to last a week.

"I'm giving up more than you are," Blye remarked,

hoisting the sack over his shoulder. "This girl wouldn't let me go if she knew. Nor would the dog, I imagine. I take that credit to myself."

"How will you go?" Okada asked, ignoring the reference to Eve.

"The way you came. It's your business to convince these people that I'm on my way home. They won't let me into the tunnel."

Okada persuaded them easily and ingeniously. By vivid pantomime with the gold tooth which he had stolen from the Abbot he made them believe that Blye was an unfortunate companion in adventure who had lost his own means of identification as a son of their fathers. He further pled that Blye, having seen all he desired, be allowed to depart.

When Eve understood she went white and trembled. Blye ignored her. The men drew apart to one of the tables, where they sat down and threshed the matter out, with frequent glances at Blye and pointings to the tunnel. At last it was decided that the request be granted. They called Eve and questioned her. Blye could not judge from their faces whether Eve was being exiled with her lover or merely being detailed to see that he left the plateau without thieving. The upshot of the conversation was that Eve hurried from the hall, to return shortly with a second sack of food. The faithful Jonah attended her with smiles and leaps. Whatever it might be for her it was a holiday for him.

"You know where they are taking you?" Blye asked Okada as the bearers lifted the pallet.

"I can guess. There must be springs or baths impregnated with the emanations from the yellow metal somewhere in all these mines."

"Not exactly," Blye replied as he followed Eve and Jonah into the first, dark entrance to the mother lode. "You don't understand any of their language?"

"It was dead to the rest of Asia before writing was invented. I can understand nothing they say."

Blye disbelieved him, but held his tongue. He wondered what the Secretary of State would think of him now, could he see the trusted secret agent of the United States leaving the field in possession of the enemy, simply because the latter had agreed to leave too as soon as he could walk. "Don't believe everything your Japanese friends tell you," had been the Secretary's parting words. Well, Blye reflected, he had not swallowed Okada's denial that he understood any of the plateau dwellers' language. Of course he would be unable to follow everything they said, but if Blye was any judge of a man's mind from his face, he was willing to gamble that Okada picked up at least a word here and there as his hosts were talking.

Had he known all of Okada's history he would have felt surer that the Japanese with the mask-like face was getting the drift of what was being said. But he was not to learn till later, from Tanabe himself, of Okada's brilliant career as a student of early Asiatic dialects. What made Blye suspicious of everything Okada said was his strong conviction that the Japanese was really quite able to rise then and there from his sickbed and do the hundred yards in about ten

seconds flat. He was shamming, and was doing it quite well. So was Blye. He wondered whether Okada also saw through him. On the whole he was relieved that matters had come so unexpectedly to a crisis. The sooner the affair was settled one way or the other the better would it be for his nerves. He was beginning to feel the tension and to wish that something would snap.

As he expected, the bearers branched off with their 'invalid' at the tunnel leading to the fall. Their destination obviously was the chamber at the end of the tunnel under the silver sea, where their suffering prodigal might bask his way to health in the green vapor.

Blye bade his late enemy farewell.

"If we ever meet again," he said, "I give you leave to stick a knife into me anywhere you like if I have breathed a single word about this place to your Emperor. You will be following me out in a week or two?"

"On the word of a Samurai."

Blye bowed respectfully.

"I know what that means," he said, and turned to follow Eve and Jonah.

Eve was inclined to be both sad and distant. She did not like her job, whatever it might be, and she refused to let Blye walk with her.

To this day he does not know what was in her mind. He would give a great deal to be sure that she was following him, or rather leading him, for he trailed

behind, into exile. But always the doubt that she was merely his guide to see that he did not wander from the blue line down one of its lighted branches, to lose himself in the bowels of the earth, haunts him like an uneasy dream. Did she care for him, or was she willing to let him go when the question of leaving her people and following him had to be answered either yes or no?

Just after they passed the pillared corridor, Blye stepped to her side and relieved her of her heavy sack. She made no resistance. Looking back on it now, he sees his mistake. From her mute compliance he cannot tell what she meant. Was she willing to be left behind, or did she hope that he had changed his mind, and would return with her to throw in his lot with her people? His mistake was doubly bad, for he left his own sack beside hers and turned back.

She may have totally misapprehended his intention. He meant her to understand that they were to return later together to claim their food and be guided then by her decision. If she was merely his guide, very well. She could return alone, after seeing him safely to the crater far beyond the plateau. If she was going into voluntary exile with him he would know it when she looked back for the first and the last time on what had been her home. Perhaps she had already been to the end of the blue line, but he thought not. She merely knew that by following one broad vein, unmistakable to the dwellers in the ancient mines, it was possible to reach the distant mountains of her longing. But the way was long, and the adventure not to be lightly

undertaken, so she, like all of her people for generations had never ventured far from the place of contentment. With a twinge of pain for which he could not account, Blye saw that she carried his gift. The field glasses hung by their strap from her shoulder.

She followed him back without protest and turned with him down the tunnel to the fall, and even entered the last tunnel under the silver sea without seeking to restrain him. Perhaps she thought he wished to see their shrine again before leaving the country. She knew, he suspected, that he had already seen it. Jonah hung back, but dutifully followed when she called. It was the only word she had spoken since they started. On their rambles together she talked to him as a rule, trying to teach him her language. To-day however she was silent.

They entered the last tunnel leading to the shrine of the beneficent green light. Before they had gone ten feet a terrific jar hurled them to the floor. Only the sharp turn at the far end saved them from instant death by concussion. The force of the explosion had expended itself in the last, short chamber of the shrine. Okada's halogens and compounds of nitrogen had done their work. One glance at the flaming green sun in its golden sky of blue, blazing down through the transparent rock on his upturned face had told him that his long journey was ended. Before the bearers could reach a place of safety he had made his supreme gesture for his country's honor and finished his task like a Samurai.

Blye got Eve and Jonah out before the rod of mer-

cury shot from the tunnel. They were on the right side of it; they must reach the still invisible entrance of the corridor leading to the mother lode before it flooded.

Before they entered it, Blye glanced back. The volume of silver thundering over the fall had dwindled to a thin thread. Eve carried the dog, refusing to let Blye take the stunned body from her arms.

They reached the main corridor of the blue line just as the rock began to tremble. The deluge of mercury was finding its swift way into new channels, racing down chasms and deep fissures to the living fires, there to be vaporized instantly. How long would the roof above those fires resist the upward pressure of millions of tons of quicksilver suddenly converted to metallic steam? If Eve understood what was about to happen she showed no fear. Turning to the right she raced up the long slope, still carrying the dog, to the meeting hall. Blye overtook her and snatched Jonah from her arms. That race seemed never-ending.

Panting into the hall she stopped to recover her breath. The people's faces were white, but they made no show of fear. With voice and gesture Eve told what had happened. Blye tried to urge them to fly down the main tunnel of the mother lode while there was yet time.

Some started and turned back. It may be that they doubted Eve's report of the danger. After the first concussion and the subsequent jar as the mercury struck the farther wall of the cavern, there had been nothing to cause undue alarm to a people accustomed

to tremblings of the earth. They held a short council. From their gestures Blye inferred that they would rather face death where they stood than risk life in strange places that neither they nor their fathers had ever seen. He was powerless to change their decision. His frantic fear of what was about to overtake them gave his acting an eloquence that surpassed words. They would not be shaken. Worse, they urged him to escape.

He refused. The men held another council, this time with Eve. Before he realized what was happening, she had seized his arm and was hurrying him down the corridor. Jonah, now recovered, followed at her heels.

This compromise, he thought bitterly, was the best he could do. If the others preferred to stay till the end, one at least should have a fighting chance for her life. Seizing her hand he sped down the long slope to the pillared corridor.

Before they reached the spot where the ancient miners had cut away the floor to reveal the river of mercury, the air of the main tunnel had become stifling to the point of suffocation. Already the vaporized mercury was beginning to leak through the shattered labyrinths of the vast mine. They must gain the upward slope beyond the pillared corridor or be smothered.

As they passed the third pillar Blye noticed that the light in the main corridor was greenish. Guessing the cause he stopped for one last look down the chasm to the river of mercury. Although its age-old source had gone dry with the cessation of the fall, the river far

beneath him was in full flood, dammed by some obstruction at which the flashing waves leapt incessantly. A part of the flood of quicksilver was finding its way into the ancient channel.

Eve joined him, and together they stood silently gazing down at the rapidly mounting tide of mercury, chafing like a millrace to lift its temporary barrier and sweep with it down to the subterranean fires.

Eve may not have guessed what that obstruction was, but Blye did. The waves all about it seethed with green light as they strove to wash the huge ball of metal, which less than two hours ago was their generative sun, down to oblivion. The rock pillars jarred ominously, but neither watcher stirred. Blye felt that to see this ending of the labor of perhaps a hundred generations was worth the gamble of his own short span.

At last a sudden inrush of mercury, released by the bursting of some barrier farther back, swelled the racing tide visibly. The flood boiled up to within twenty feet of their eyes; a huge zone of blinding green flashed for a moment on the crest of the metal wave, rolled over, and plunged down the rushing torrent.

They had seen the setting of the green sun which a whole race had toiled to raise, atom by atom, from the secret chambers of a vast mountain range, and now they must flee for their lives.

No barrier of stone or steel could withstand the sudden impact of that battering ram of liquid metal. Somewhere between the draining lake and this bridge on which they stood, the roof of the ancient channel

curved low above the flood, and against this arched barrier the full flood of the racing metal impinged, crushing the stone to fragments. The floor of the bridge crumpled slowly; an irregular crack at right angles to the axis of the mother lode cleft the rock floor in two, and one section of the dark corridor into which they sprang moved slowly past the other. In a few seconds the moving sections of the corridors would pass one another completely. Blye and Eve would have no choice but to return to the meeting hall to share the fate of the plateau dwellers, without hope of escape by following the blue line, or they must take the other way and leave the plateau behind them forever.

Blye does not know which choice Eve would have made had not Jonah chosen for her. Terrified by the moving of the solid rock, the dog darted back toward the hall. It was but natural that he should seek safety by running home. Eve called and ran after him. Before Blye could follow, the overlapping sections of the severed corridors had narrowed so that he was unable to squeeze himself through. He was forced to desist just as Eve, returning with Jonah, forced the dog through the rapidly narrowing window between them. In another three seconds there was but sufficient room for Eve to thrust through her arm. Blye felt some hard object pressed against his coat. She was returning his gift, the field glasses which no longer could give her pleasure. She had guessed what fate must overtake her and all her people, and she had saved the dog.

Whether, if Jonah had gone the other way, Eve

would have followed him into exile, leaving her people to perish without her, or whether she would have realized at the last moment that all her happiness still lay with them as it always had, Blye will never know.

Had the choice been his he would have returned with her.

CHAPTER XXII

DECORATED

THE American Ambassador, resident in Tokyo, cautiously communicated by a roundabout maze of telephone calls with 'Mr. Smith.' For some weeks past 'Mr. Smith' and Miss Shortridge had both been residing in Tokyo, 'Mr. Smith' as a humble American business man, Miss 'Forsyth' as a much fêted and popular specialist in English conversation.

"Is that you?" the Ambassador asked when the wary Missourian answered the telephone in person.

"If it's you, it's me," the Secretary replied somewhat enigmatically. This in fact was their simple but effective countersign to guard against ingenious spies who might personate one or other of the suspected Americans to pump the other. The Japanese were not asleep, in spite of their unfailing courtesy.

"It's all right then," the Ambassador went on. "There's a short message in code for you, sent on by your stenographer in Washington."

"What does it say? Decode it, will you, and let me know?"

"Hold the line. I'll have it done in half a minute."

At his end the Ambassador handed the message to his stenographer to be put on the decoding machine.

"Hullo," he said over the wire. "Here's the message. 'James Blye cables from Nagasaki asking when and where he shall report.' "

"Good work!" the Secretary exclaimed. "I've been expecting to hear from him for over a month. Cable my stenographer—code of course—to cable him to come on here at once. He is to ask at this hotel for Mr. George W. Smith. That's awfully good news. I was beginning to be afraid Okada had done for him. Now we shall get to the bottom of things in a hurry."

They did. Three days later Blye, looking ten years older than when the Secretary saw him off at the South Station in Boston, presented himself at 'Mr. Smith's' hotel. The curious, tufted dog which followed close at his heels elicited smiles from all who saw his utterly dejected face. Blye went up at once to 'Mr. Smith's' rooms.

After the first greetings, rather reserved on Blye's side, the Secretary paused with a puzzled look on his face.

"You've been ill, haven't you?" he asked.

Blye shook his head.

"Nothing to speak of. I got pretty hungry coming back, but it didn't last long. I came home straight down Cho-sen."

"This your dog?" the Secretary inquired, to fill an awkward gap.

"Yes, that's Jonah. He found the way half the time. As a bird dog he can't be beaten. Without his science I doubt whether I should have managed to exist. He can catch anything with wings provided it lights for

half a second in the grass, or comes within three feet of his head. Stand up, Jonah boy, and show how it's done."

At a word from Blye Jonah leapt to his hind legs and snapped viciously at the air.

"You see," Blye smiled, "he got that one. Well, I suppose a report is in order. First, I owe you a couple of stone eggs. I shipped them to my landlady in Cambridge."

"The gold tooth then did amount to something in Okada's plans, and your theory was essentially wrong?"

"You win both bets. My theory wasn't hopelessly bad. But it wasn't right. Well, never mind about it now. You win."

He lapsed into silence, and the Secretary furtively studied his companion's haggard face.

"Did anything go wrong with the expedition?" he asked.

"That is what I don't know," Blye confessed. "It may all have gone wrong. The whole thing may have been a ghastly mistake."

"Okada found what he was looking for?"

"Oh," Blye responded as if Okada's affair had long ceased to interest him, "he found it all right. He's dead."

"Then he failed?"

"Not according to his lights. I should say he made a greater success of his game than I did of mine. He committed suicide."

"You seem to be rather done up," the Secretary

resumed after a long silence. "I shan't pester you with more questions just now, if you answer just one. Will the Japanese get what they wanted?"

"No. It has been wiped out of existence. And I wish I had been too."

"Buck up, man. It can't be as bad as you seem to think it."

Blye said nothing for some moments, absently pulling the patient Jonah's whiskers. At last he roused himself.

"Can you arrange a conference for me with the Emperor? There are some things he should know."

The Secretary gasped.

"Of course, if you wish it. I can do it through our Ambassador at once. You can be sure the Emperor won't refuse."

"You have been following from this end?"

"Miss Shortridge and I," the Secretary admitted with some hesitation. Seeing that Blye showed no particular interest at the mention of her name, the Secretary felt emboldened to continue. "By the way," he asked dubiously, "were you interested in Miss Shortridge? Pardon me for asking."

"I was," Blye admitted. "She is nothing to me now."

The Secretary heaved a sigh of relief.

"Then I haven't done you any bad turn, as I half thought I might have been doing, in becoming so friendly with her. Our work has thrown us together constantly. And I may as well acknowledge," he continued defiantly, "that we have become engaged."

"Congratulations!"

The response was perfunctory. Not his best friend could have guessed from the colorless tone that Blye had ever thought of Geraldine as a possible sweetheart. The Secretary hurried into a summary of Geraldine's adventures since she left Somerville. Blye seemed scarcely to listen as he sat idly stroking Jonah's hairless face. Only when the Secretary passed to an account of what he and Geraldine had been doing recently did he seem to take any interest. For the past five weeks Geraldine had moved in a whirl of the gayest society of the capital, appearing no less than seven times at court receptions or garden parties where the Emperor was present. Under the Secretary's guidance she had tried to learn from the Japanese what they expected to gain should Okada prove successful. The Japanese for their part exhausted all their subtle ingenuity in trying to discover whether Geraldine still possessed the gold tooth. With the Secretary's skillful training she managed to hold her own easily and baffled all their attempts. As she expressed it, she was having the time of her young life. And she strongly suspected that the moment her Japanese friends learned what had actually become of the gold tooth, they one and all would proceed to give her the very politest and coldest of polite cold shoulders. So Geraldine stretched all her wits to conceal what her friends would have given all their own teeth to see, and never threw her head back when she laughed.

"Now about that conference," the Secretary concluded. "When do you wish it?"

"To-night. Tell the Emperor through whoever sees him that I shall not be in town to-morrow."

"You're off again?"

"Yes, clear away. I'm fed up on civilization. You had better tell the Emperor—or ask him, whatever the proper etiquette may be—to have all the advisory committee he needs on hand. Miss Shortridge should come too. This is the final showdown. We shall all see for once exactly where we stand."

He got up to go, and Jonah rose too.

"I'm going to take a nap," he said, his hand on the door knob. "My room is on the third floor. If those people want to see me it will have to be to-night. If not they can one and all go to hell."

"Well, I'm damned," the Secretary ejaculated slowly when Jonah's mop had vanished and the door closed. "What's up? Has some painted savage broken his tender heart? Who would have thought it? Still, he was always rather stand-offish about trying to get anything out of Geraldine. It's just a passing weakness due to his age. A year from now he will have forgotten her name."

This was true in a way, because Blye never knew what Eve's mother called her.

At seven o'clock that evening the Secretary himself rapped deferentially on Blye's door.

"Time to be off, to keep our appointment," he announced when Blye answered.

"All right. I shall be glad to get down to business."

He seemed to have shaken off some of the after-

noon's gloom. At any rate he had his feelings well under control. Jonah accompanied him downstairs to the Secretary's car, which carried them swiftly to the Imperial palace, where some magical influence seemed to let them pass the sentries and palace functionaries as if unseen.

On being presented to the Emperor Blye bowed formally but said nothing. Geraldine's non-commital "How do you do, Mr. Blye," was returned in kind. Narumi's deep bow was met with a curt nod. To Tanabe he was equally short.

"Are these all?" he asked.

The Secretary nodded.

"What is first in the order of business?"

"Your report, I should say," the Secretary suggested. "Unless you care to ask some questions first?"

"There are a great many things in this whole matter," Blye began slowly, "that I do not understand, and a few that I never expect to understand. Some will clear up with time and thought. To-night all I am interested in is putting an end to the fruitless search for something that no longer exists."

The Emperor and Narumi exchanged a quick, doubting glance. It did not pass unnoticed.

"I scarcely blame your Majesty," Blye remarked directly to the Emperor, "for distrusting me after all the tissue of trickery there has been woven about this affair, and which your men have tried to unravel. Still, I am speaking the plain truth. You are welcome to examine my baggage at any time."

Narumi after a glance at his Imperial master entered a vigorous protest.

"That will do," Blye said. "If I'm mistaken as to your feelings, I apologize. Let us get on with the business. First, I wish Miss Shortridge to tell us what she did with that gold tooth which started all this."

Geraldine looked interrogatively at her fiancé. The Secretary seemed to say 'No.' Blye also glanced at his friend.

"This won't do," he said. "All the cards must be laid on the table. Now, Miss Shortridge, what did you do with that tooth? The Emperor, I understand, would be glad to hear."

The Emperor apparently remained wrapped in oriental calm, but a glitter came into his eyes as he waited impassively for Geraldine's answer. She told briefly how she had flung the tooth into the waters of Yokohama harbor.

"Why?" Narumi began harshly, but at a lightning glance from the Emperor he stopped short.

"That is my own business.

"May I ask," Narumi begged, in a changed, persuasive voice, "whether Okada ever intimated to you the value of that tooth?"

"Answer him," Blye said shortly, as she hesitated.

"He did, when he proposed his plan of hiding it."

"You agreed willingly?" Blye asked.

"I refuse to answer."

"Very well. It makes no difference."

"Did he tell you," Narumi continued, "why the tooth was valuable?"

"No. He just told me it was his most precious possession. It was not gold, he said."

"Did he say what it was?"

"Never mind that now," Blye interrupted. "It will come out later, unless I'm mistaken."

"Would the lady mind showing us her teeth?" interposed Tanabe with a winning smile.

"Show them," Blye directed. "Let this thing end here."

With a glance at the Secretary, Geraldine opened her mouth wide, to exhibit two shining rows of pearly teeth, with a vacant place just where it should have been. There was not a gold crown in her head. The Japanese seemed satisfied in a half-disappointed way.

"You see," Blye said with a grim smile, "she hasn't got your gold tooth. I'm sorry, for your sake. Okada told me that it alone, in time, could make Japan the richest nation on earth."

If the Japanese felt indignation or disappointment, their faces revealed nothing of it.

"Now," Blye resumed, speaking to Narumi, "about your fellow countrymen, Kameda and Okada. So far as I could learn, Okada broke Kameda's neck because he suspected him of working for himself, and not for the glory of his country. Okada very properly, like a good Samurai, committed suicide for the honor of Japan. My only criticism is that he should have done so about fourteen years ago. He must have been insane when he disappeared from Japan. What do you know of him, Professor Narumi?"

Narumi, whether he believed what he said or not,

deemed it prudent to confirm Blye's estimate and to agree that Okada undoubtedly was mentally unhinged since his student days. From the docile Tanabe he drew a ready confirmation of this theory. No young man in his right mind could have abandoned philology for chemistry. Blye waited till the old scholar finished, and then gently told him the story of what happened in the monastery, watching closely the expressionless faces of the Emperor and Narumi while he related the thieving of the second gold tooth.

"It will do no good," he concluded, "to search that ancient home of simple-minded old men. From what Okada told me before he killed himself, I feel sure the Abbot has not a third gold tooth. So you had better put him as well as Miss Shortridge out of your minds. Now, Professor Narumi, will you please tell me the story of how all this wild goose chase started? Explain it in your own way, and if you can convince me that you have the right to know I shall reciprocate by telling you where to look for enough of that pale yellow metal to crown every tooth in Japan."

Again Narumi and the Emperor seemed to exchange glances, and the latter gave a very slight movement of his head, which was a signal to tell the truth and nothing but the truth.

Narumi began with Okada's early days as a student, frequently seeking confirmation from the venerable Tanabe for some detail of Okada's progress.

"You say he was very good at the old languages?" Blye asked.

Tanabe became enthusiastic. Blye cut him off.

"That's all I wanted to know," he said. "Okada understood more than he admitted. Please go on, Professor Narumi."

The chemist then sketched Okada's brilliant career as an experimenter. The climax of his story was reached when he related how one day Okada succeeded in hastening the natural rate of a delicate electrochemical reaction several millionfold by means of a certain metal—in fact the gold tooth—which he had obtained from the unsuspecting Tanabe. At the time Narumi had not known what was sealed in the 'silver tube,' accepting his fellow-worker's assurance that it was a 'pulverized mineral.'

"What was this experiment?" Blye demanded. "You may as well tell me," he added, seeing the questioning glance which Narumi shot towards the Emperor, "because I can form a pretty fair guess myself."

"Let me begin," went on Narumi, "by recalling a simple experiment which every student in high school performs as his first exercise in practical chemistry. To make oxygen you mix with the potassium chlorate a certain proportion of manganese dioxide. The dioxide is what chemists call a catalyst. It is not changed itself at the end of the experiment. It is added merely to increase the rate at which the oxygen is given off.

"In my experiments," Narumi continued, "I thought that if I might discover a catalyst to hasten the reaction in which I was interested, my process might become of vast practical importance. As it was, the whole process was nothing better than an extremely expensive laboratory toy. Long before the Germans and

some of my own countrymen succeeded in breaking mercury down to gold by means of a strong electric current, I had done the same thing repeatedly in my laboratory. Okada helped me. The first great problem which I set him was the discovery of the proper catalyst to hasten the reaction, thereby decreasing the amount of electricity necessary, and so effecting a great saving in cost and making the process thoroughly practical. The Japanese engineers had located vast deposits of mercury in Asia. The possibilities need not be enlarged

"In seeking for this catalyst, Okada and I had even a grander object in view. Could we but find the first, we might build up from it the appropriate catalysts for hastening the natural evolution of all the elements. But, for the time, the search for the first, which should accelerate the electrical transmutation of mercury to gold, was our immediate task. Like me, Okada expected to find radium, polonium, actinium, or some of the other radioactive elements to be the key. We tried them all without success.

"Then one day, Okada came to me with a sealed, silver tube in which, he declared, he had a new compound which he believed would act as the desired catalyst. We tried it. The yield was increased immediately several millionfold. The electro-disruption of quicksilver to gold was a triumphant, commercial success!

"Okada deceived me. He pretended to share my joy and my hopes for the future greatness of our country. Where had he obtained this magic material?"

"He did not show you the gold tooth?"

"Never. He only showed me the silver tube which, he declared, he had sealed in order to safeguard the priceless 'powder' against possible loss. Feeling that he did not yet wish to share his secret fully with me, I did not press the point, trusting to old friendship to show him in time that I was trustworthy. The tube, he declared, contained a pulverized rock which he had discovered in Cho-sen during his visit there some few years previously.

"This rock, he said, had attracted his attention by the curious superstition of the natives that it cured toothache by the influence of some beneficent spirit residing within it. He traced the superstition, he told me, believing it to be founded on some fact. Probably, he thought, the mineral composing the rock was slightly radioactive, and therefore perhaps of some medical value."

"I made exactly the same blunder," Blye interrupted. "Only, as it happens, Okada was lying deliberately and ingeniously. I suppose you at once suggested that he go to Cho-sen and bring back the whole toothstone from Seoul?"

"I did, and he agreed to test the truth of his hypothesis more fully. On his previous visit he had simply collected some of the mineral for future analysis. He did not, he asserted, test the rock *in situ*."

"Then what happened?" asked Blye.

"On his second expedition he disappeared."

"And it never occurred to you to cross-question Mr. Tanabe here?"

"Why should it have occurred to me?" Narumi protested. "Not till the first unusual clue was found in America did I know anything about Okada's gold tooth. Why should Tanabe have told me when I, not knowing what had passed between him and Okada, never inquired? Professor Tanabe is an archaeologist, not a chemist."

"You are quite right," Blye added dryly. "Mr. Tanabe perhaps felt a little bashful about bragging how successful he was as a trader among the monks. I see your point. As for me," he continued, "I did rather better than you. From my studies of certain Jesuit and Franciscan travels of early date in China and in Korea, also from the symbolic commentary on the earliest Jesuit editions of *De re metallica,* I suspected that the 'gold' in Okada's mysterious tooth was itself a mere symbol for something precious, just as we speak of 'golden days.'

"The truth as I see it is this. Long ago those old monks actually used their precious pair of golden teeth for the healing—or charming away—of certain diseases. The wonder of the supposed cures spread down from the Northern mountains to lower Cho-sen. The 'gold tooth' became a synonym for good 'medicine.' So when the ignorant peasants, forgetting the true origin of the phrase, lit upon the huge, worthless Toothstone just out of Seoul, they concluded that they had found the real thing, the medicine of medicines. To this day some of the pilgrims from the north, where the old report still persists in the remotest valleys, call the Toothstone the 'golden tooth.' Anyway,

the theory I formed started me off up north. An inaccurate but nevertheless respectable map by one of your geographers gave me just enough to show that probably there was more than a gold tooth behind all the superstitions. To confess my erroneous expectations fully, I at first thought it possible I should find a vast body of highly radioactive ore—a new variety of pitchblende, in fact. By the way, is the Toothstone outside of Seoul radioactive?"

"Not in the least," Narumi replied. "I tested it myself two years after Okada's disappearance."

"Then," said Blye, turning to the Secretary, "that first egg is doubly yours. The Toothstone never cured anybody's toothache. Collect from my landlady in Cambridge."

"You found no valuable minerals?" Tanabe gently hazarded.

"Lots, but your geographer has already reported on the cinnabar I imagine. I found something much more valuable."

"What?" demanded Narumi and Tanabe in unison, leaning forward excitedly in their seats.

"A ball, twenty feet or more in diameter, of Professor Narumi's catalyst. There is enough of it to change all the mercury in the world into the best gold. What it will do when hooked up with an electric current I can only guess. By itself it does quite well. With electricity it should revolutionize the gold standard, and give the country possessing it control of the gold market, and therefore also of the commerce, of the entire civilized world, inside of a year."

"I claim this ball of the new catalyst as the property of the United States of America!" the Secretary exclaimed, leaping to his feet.

"It is ours!" cried both the Japanese professors, starting excitedly from their chairs and even forgetting they were in the presence of the Emperor. "Cho-sen is under our protectorate."

"Then," said Blye with a smile, "I should say it belongs to Cho-sen. It was found in Korean or Manchurian territory—I can't be sure which, as it was far underground. If it was in Manchuria, then the Manchurians own it; if it was in Cho-sen, the Koreans."

"Manchuria is our child too!" Narumi shouted.

"Therefore," Blye remarked, "of course you are entitled to Manchuria's toys! Now Mr. Secretary, how do you prove the claim of the United States to this unique treasure?"

"By the right of discovery, of course," the Secretary retorted. "The World Court, the League of Nations, I feel sure will sustain our claim. It is indisputable."

"And if the League awards it to Japan, or to Korea, or to Manchuria, what then?" Blye insinuated.

"It is unthinkable," the Secretary asserted.

"For the sake of argument suppose it is thinkable," Blye urged. "I'm not sure that it isn't. All my testimony will be in favor of Manchuria or Korea."

"You were paid by our government to explore those mountains."

"I hadn't thought of that," Blye admitted.

"The mountains are ours!" Narumi sputtered.

"You mean under your protection," Blye demurred. Then, suddenly, he sat back in his chair and laughed a short, bitter laugh. Narumi, the Secretary of State, even the harmless old Tanabe, and the gentle Geraldine were all shouting and gesticulating at once, red and angry of face, and hoarse of voice, utterly forgetful of the conventions of civilized life and of the respect due to the Emperor, who, alone, sat silent and motionless, his sombre eyes staring straight in front of him. One and all seemed to pin their faith on the World Court. Blye knocked on the table to bring the disputants to their senses.

"Suppose, gentlemen," he suggested when he succeeded in making himself heard, "just suppose the World Court awards this ball to Korea or to Manchuria. What then?"

"The United States," the Secretary retorted with dignity, "has always insisted that it be left free in the management of its own affairs. This is an instance in point."

"And Japan?" Blye asked, turning to the Emperor and bowing.

"The World Court is a purely advisory body," answered Narumi for his master.

"Say 'corpse,' not 'body,'" Blye suggested. "It would more nearly fit your meaning. I take it that neither of you gentlemen would willingly yield in favor of the other?"

They glared at one another.

"War?" Blye murmured, glancing at Narumi and the Secretary in turn.

"We shall uphold our country's honor," they both exclaimed in sudden unison. Again Blye gave a short, little laugh.

Geraldine, red with anger, pitched into the fray.

"You call yourself an American," she exclaimed contemptuously. "If you were a man—Oh!"

"'And you too, Geraldine,'" he groaned. "This is going too far!" Getting up, so as to place himself between the excited arguers, he bowed again to the Emperor. "Now, I have a real apology to make. If you will all sit down, I shall do my duty and admit I have acted disgracefully. I am thoroughly ashamed of myself. Before allowing the discussion to reach this stage I should have told you where that ball really is at present."

"Where?" they demanded in chorus.

"Somewhere below a sea of molten lava half a mile deep."

With cold, impersonal precision he detailed to them the history of his stay on the plateau, omitting only all mention of Eve. He did not see why she should be dragged into the story. His manner was convincing. Even Narumi could not doubt that frigid, circumstantial account. When he came to Okada's spectacular suicide the Japanese professors shuddered slightly. The Secretary swore under his breath. He told how he had watched the great ball flash under the bridge on its way to the subterranean fires, and they groaned.

In a few sentences he told them of his escape: how, looking back from the safety of the extinct crater, he saw through his glasses the faint cloud of mercury

vapor gather above the volcanic nub of the plateau, and how he watched for hours till the dreaded event happened. Strangely enough, the first eruption engendered by the escaping mercury as it vaporized in the deep chasms of perpetual fire, was in an extinct crater far to the east of the plateau. One after another the whole vast chain to the east burst into violent eruption, deluging the amphitheatre and the plateau with flaming hail. Only after this eruption had been in progress for several hours did the nub on the plateau burst suddenly into crimson flame. The last he saw through the dense, rolling smoke was the red lava gushing like water through a dozen or more huge fissures that cleft the plateau from top to bottom and far down into the floor of the amphitheatre. Not caring to see any more, he said, when the final series of explosions rent the solid rock of the plateau to splinters, he hurled away his glasses and raced down the south slope with the dog.

"What date was that?" Narumi asked.

Blye stated the date as accurately as he could, saying he could not be sure.

"Our seismographs," Narumi confirmed, "recorded an earthquake of extreme violence at approximately that date. Computation located it in southern Manchuria."

"The same one, undoubtedly," Blye agreed. "Now, gentlemen, for the conclusion of the whole matter. I propose a vote of thanks to our departed comrade, Satoru Okada."

They stared at him in astonishment.

"But why?" Geraldine protested.

"Because he saved us from ourselves. But for his sublime self-sacrifice we should even now have been arming for the next world conflict. And those unhappy people on the plateau would have tasted the bitter fruit of our civilization. It is chiefly in memory of them that I make my motion.

"To us it is little that Okada starved and lied, slaved and murdered to save what he conceived to be the honor of his country. From the beginning he was insane, a fanatic, a cold religious maniac. He told me how he endured poverty and abuse for nearly eleven years, trying to scrape together the money for his explorations. Only as he studied the rolls did he begin to imagine where the 'great evil' of his delusion might lie. To reach it and destroy it once and for all he needed money, but less than he supposed.

"He knew that he was being sought. Your men, perhaps unknowingly, hounded him from one refuge to another. His first real success was with Mr. Shortridge. Still poring over the rolls he inferred that the ancient people, as he had suspected when he left Japan, made a talisman of the pale yellow 'medicine,' accepting as their own only those who knew its secret. Your spies, he guessed, were watching him. He felt that you, Professor Narumi, saw him 'from a great distance.' Your publication he read as a challenge. You, or your followers, might rediscover the clue which he had obliterated. Before this, one of your men all but discovered him. It was then that he used Miss Shortridge as a hiding place for his priceless talisman.

Should he be killed, the spies would never discover the gold tooth which now, he believed, was all but indispensable in his search. Without it he might succeed, but only after long effort; with it, the descendants of the ancient miners, if any still lived, would accept him as one of their own.

"His treachery to me at the end was of a piece with the rest. I expected it. For, if I escaped, I might reveal what had become of his gold tooth by trying to get it from Miss Shortridge. If I never returned, she perhaps would go to her grave with it in ignorance of what she possessed. Any attempt on my part to obtain the tooth might well give your spies the clue. Then Japan would become possessed of her slow but certain ruin—according to his fanatical ideas. With the artificial production of gold from mercury hastened several millionfold, it would be but a matter of a few years until the hoard grew beyond all decent limits. Therefore he decided to destroy me when he destroyed himself. He thought the explosion, I have no doubt, would shatter the floor of the quicksilver sea and so wreck the mother lode before I could escape. My fatal mistake was that I was too slow in following him.

"But his sacrifice nevertheless achieved its end. He has saved us from ourselves, insane as he was. And better, he has saved those people on the plateau. Saturo Okada deserves our thanks. Let that be his epitaph. Many a man has had a worse one."

There was a silence. Then, as though moved by the same thought, all, except the Emperor, rose unanimously.

When they were all seated again, the Emperor who, so far, had not infringed his imperial dignity by the utterance of a single word, lifted his head and made a slight motion with his hand. It was obvious he was about to speak. There was a respectful silence of expectancy.

"Mr. Blye," he slowly said, "in the name of the Empire, I thank you, and, in recognition of your great services, to-morrow I shall confer upon you the Order of the Rising Sun of the First Class."

So Dinosaur was to be decorated!

The Emperor resumed his impassive silence, and the Secretary of State rose with an air of importance.

"Mr. Blye well knows that his country is not forgetful of those who serve her faithfully in war and in peace. As a loyal American he expects in return for his remarkable achievement only the gratitude of his country. America has no formal honors, no decorations, to bestow. In lieu of these I now assure Mr. Blye that he will be remembered by a not wholly inadequate honorarium. This I have no doubt will be none the less welcome because it was unsought and unexpected."

Blye rose again and bowed, this time to the Secretary, still without speaking. He had nothing to say.

When once he regained the privacy of his room, at the hotel, Blye sat down on a chair before the Toby-faced Jonah.

"Well, Jonah," he said, gravely addressing the enquiring face before him. "We shan't go to the Palace

to-morrow for our golden trinket. We shan't wait for the 'honorarium' either. Pack up. We're off, for God knows where. I still have enough for travelling expenses to the desert. Come on! We shall raise some rare birds together—ostriches, bustards, possibly the Great Roc itself."

Eight weeks later Mr. and Mrs. Eliakim Shortridge in Somerville received a marked copy, by registered mail, of the *Washington Post*. On opening it they discovered on the front page a glowing account of the marriage—the swellest function of the social year—of the Secretary of State to Mrs. Reginald Baker, "widow of the late well known tea-exporter of Tokyo of that name."

After a long moment of astounded silence, gravely fraught for both of them with the danger of heart-failure from shock, they clasped hands ecstatically. Their daughter after all had turned out an honest woman!